

THE ETHIOPIAN



THE ETHIOPIAN

A NARRATIVE OF THE
SOCIETY OF HUMAN
LEOPARDS

BY
JOHN CAMERON GRANT

*“Can the Ethiopian change his skin,
Or the leopard his spots?”*

JEREMIAH xiii. 23

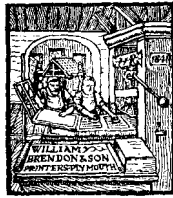
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CHARLES CARRINGTON

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FOREWORD

ENGLAND, during all the long years of her existence, has ever struggled in the interests of civilisation. We maintain this in the teeth of all her calumniators. Erred and strayed in her chivalric quest, sometimes, she may have, but if the Transvaal fight, the Ashanti rebellion, the Omdurman triumph, and the Chinese imbroglio do not tend towards breaking down cruelty and iniquity in the dark places of the earth, we throw up our thesis to the first schoolboy.

Sorry should we be to see "The Ethiopian" read and regarded as a novel. It is far from that. These pages are not the empty vapourings of an hysterical person, but the carefully recorded observations of a Traveller, Anthropologist, Humanitarian in the highest sense, and a Thinker. Everything is based upon fact. Unfortunately, to interest the people one is forced to throw into form of romance that which, for our forefathers, would have been embodied in an Essay or Pamphlet.

The groundwork of "The Ethiopian" can be easily proved both from Official Records and the testimony of accredited witnesses: moreover, some of the acts outlined in the book took place under the very eyes of the Author.

Baden-Powell, the hero of Mafeking, will scarcely be doubted, and may, therefore, be subpoenaed as a credible witness. The reader can refer to his work, "The Downfall of Prempeh," where the nameless things delineated by Mr. Cameron Grant are struck at without reserve.*

"The Ethiopian" is a book unique in its way and one which ought to make us pause and think: for the problem of the black race, like that of the yellow, will have some day to be solved, and the sooner we make up our minds upon the subject the better for all concerned.

Of course, the author in a work meant for general consumption has to be guarded in his utterance, but those who read between the lines will have ample food for thought.

I do not think anyone will deny the writer's keenness of observation and fearlessness of expression, or his power of vivid description. Nature he generally views as an artist, from the outside, and from the standpoint of appearance and action. Unlike the German professor, he is not given to "evolving an elephant from the depth of his inner consciousness."

I am not acquainted with any of his other work, if, indeed, he has committed himself elsewhere, but of this I am sure, that he has lived very close to Nature, and anything he writes will be characterised by that reality and freshness that is not to be found in the mere pedant of the study and the classroom.

Unlikely as it would seem in a book of the nature of "The Ethiopian," there are touches in the story that mark the poet in *posse*, if not in *esse*: little bits of description that go beyond simple prose and are pervaded with that atmosphere of Nature that show determinately that the mind of the writer is the mind of a poet.

I suppose a certain reticence has prevented Mr. Grant making more of the incident of Miss Maynard and her negro admirer, and has made him call up her better feelings so quickly to hold in check and finally abolish any predilection she may have felt for the fascinating neophyte. Both were young, natural, and innocent, but I think the author is a little hard upon the lady, though evidently tender for poor Jowè.

In a popular book, too, he could not make enough of the difficulties of his masters and preceptors when their promising pupil betrayed his peculiar idiosyncrasies in the dissecting room. It is to be remembered that the poor African was not, in the language of the Catechisms, "naturally bad"; far from it: the pitiful part about him was that he was controlled by instinct and by heredity.

* Vide Appendix, Note 17.

Not wickedness of heart was it, but force of instinct that led to his final fall, and this is a point that should not be lost sight of when dealing with his race. They are not naughty children, but children acting upon impulse, and the impulses of the moment, chiefly hereditary ones, from a hundred reasons, are not always good.

I know that many excellent people whose experience of negroes is confined to, say, those scattered in smaller or larger communities through the United States will be apt to demur at some of the conclusions to be drawn from my words here, or from the author's statement in the story of "The Ethiopian" itself; but the life of the black, surrounded by whites and constantly kept up to the mark (and even then not always or altogether blameless), cannot count for a moment in the true natural history of the race.

The real question is, What becomes of a negro community, highly civilised, at least so far as the outward material accompaniments of civilisation are concerned, when left to itself, without the constant oversight and the restraining influence and guidance of the white? To quote only two instances, the answer is writ large, for all men to read, in the history of Haiti and San Domingo. The negro, slowly or quickly as the case may be, but always surely, reverts to the characteristics of the lowest of the race: fetish worship, human sacrifice, cannibalism—religious, internecine, or solely "commissariat." By *commissariat-cannibalism* I mean the simple consumption of human beings for food, such as recently prevailed over at least some thirty thousand square miles in the Congo basin.

Of course, when I speak of negroes I refer to those of pure negro stock, not to half-breeds, *though these are frequently worse even than their parents*, or to members of negroid races, probably of totally different origin. Moreover, the negro, when left to himself, has always the tendency to kill out the half-breed of Caucasian origin, and blot out the stain of lighter colour. This is a curious fact when it is remembered how in most lands where the black is thrown into contact with the white, the ambition of almost every individual negress is to become the mother of a child whiter than herself.

A little book, published a year or two ago—"A Question of Colour," I think it was called, and discreetly written by a lady—brings this out more strongly than could any bare and brutal statement of fact, though in the Englishwoman's book the facts were, as might be expected, charmingly veiled and devitalised for home consumption. Tropical fruit is at times apt to disagree with the weaker European stomachs.

As these pages go to press the clouds loom darkly from Ashanti, and in that quarter self-assertive barbarism is once more endeavouring to bring back the old state of things in a city described by an eye-witness as reeking and steaming with slaughter—a city where the smell of human blood was in all men's nostrils; and the streets, the courts, the walls were plastered with gore, and the very household utensils dabbled with fresh-spilt blood: a city where from the fetish compound the faintest breeze came heavy with the odour of rotting corpses, and last week's victims were quickly covered over with a fresh holocaust of the more lately slain.

The new town could not be placed upon the ruins of the old, which lie there still, lizard-haunted and unclean. The weeds, wild figs, and creepers grow over the wretched place; but the tendencies and powers that brought it into being are scotched, not killed, and, vital as the rank vegetation of the land, ready once more to spring into poisonous life. This simply through the neglect of *the principle of paternal treatment*, too much exercised, as Buckle observed, in a highly civilised country like France, but absolutely necessary for the initiative-lacking black. A stern kindness if you like, but no temporising. *Human life, suffering and retribution, wrong-doing and justice must be viewed from the point of view of the inferior race.* To treat the black as a white man is fatal; it lowers the white and corrupts the black himself. Some day perhaps, in the course of years, he may come to look at such things from our point of view; at present he

does not. Half the troubles in life arise from not dealing with things as they are, but dealing with them as if they were what we should like them to be.

I had written the foregoing pages when, in a morning paper, I happened to come across a review by Mr. W. L. Courtney of certain of the works of the late Mr. Charles Henry Pearson, and, unlike the distinguished reviewer, I do not think that the conclusions reached by the able writer under review are even approximately correct, or that there is any great danger, even in the far future, from the *organised* military or commercial efforts of the black and yellow races. I do not believe that there is “a very possible peril” to arise from that cause, and quite agree that “no amount of black and yellow races by themselves will achieve such a future as is prophesied,” not even “if a new Tamerlane* were to arise, a ‘Scourge of God,’ with the consummate gift of welding together the scattered elements of strength in what we call the inferior races, when the world will realise with something more than discomfort how tremendous are the potential dangers for a white population throughout Asia and Africa.”

This could never be, for many reasons, so far as the Chinese are concerned, who only exist as parasites upon the security given them under civilised rule, or as busy *automata* under their own ancient, hide-bound civilisation, the very democratic organisation of which effectually prevents the successes of a despotism. For China, it must be remembered, is not a despotism, but a low type of democracy ruled by the *élite* of competitive examination. With regard to the negro races, they have merely to be left alone to relapse into utter barbarism.

Only incidentally is it, however, that these matters are touched upon in “The Ethiopian,” which, picturing forth certain things as they are, deals more with the tendency of the negro to lapse, and the curious influence the individual black male occasionally has over the white female.

A reference to the notes in the Appendix will afford authoritative confirmation of many, if not of all the facts narrated—facts occasionally somewhat startling and conducive to thought.

C. C.

PARIS, 1900.

* This must be a slip: surely Attila, and not Tamerlane, was the conqueror who christened himself the “Scourge of God.”

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APPENDIX

THE ETHIOPIAN

CHAPTER I.

THE water went down to the sea, silent and oily, slipping, sluggish and unclean, through the miles of mangroves that lay on either hand. It was nearly the ebb of the tide, and the arched roots, stretched and tangled in every conceivable and fantastic fashion, and loaded with oysters on their upper portions where they met the trunks, upheld—rather as by some architecture of witchcraft than by the growth of any natural order of plants—the green masses of their foliage, whose lower hanging branches themselves, like the tops of the roots, were oyster-laden.

It was yet very early, and here and there above the topmost leaves of the great green wilderness that stretched away on every side hung patches of mist, still clinging to the boughs as though loath to leave the embrace of the trees.

The ebb tide it was that went down to the distant bar, finding its way through a thousand deep but intricate channels, into one flank of a broad river, that itself, some hundred and forty miles down from the spot of which I write, after a course of nearly two thousand miles from the interior of the continent, found sweetness in the sea.

At this point, however, there was no sign of the ocean except the rise and fall of the tides, and no apparent sign of life save an occasional solitary crane, if we except the oysters, and the red and white crabs that wandered solemnly about or sat and soliloquised among the shelly masses. Black and oily the water looked, with patches as of mineral oil forming an iridescence round the rotten leaves that for all their pilgrimages up and down never escaped from the shade of their native branches, but, decaying as they floated, helped to swell the ooze and mud about their parent tree-stems.

But now, round a bend in the river, and coming swiftly down, appeared the foremost of a string of canoes. Great hollow logs they were, twenty to thirty feet long apiece, and manned by as savage and bestial-looking crews as ever peopled nightmare or river craft on the West Coast of Africa in the year of our Lord 1876. Some twenty or thirty these crafts numbered in all, each holding from sixteen to twenty-five men—great muscular negroes, but of very low type. Many, who appeared to be slaves, were absolutely nude, but the others were arrayed in some kind of habiliment—from simple loin cloth to padded, starched, and puffed-out cotton clothing.

In one of the canoes, considerably larger than the rest, the whole of whose foremost paddlers were naked slaves, stretched in a space in the centre, were three girls, fine specimens of the negress, also naked, apparently lying as they had been pitched into the vessel, and far too securely lashed to make any movement of themselves. Beyond them, towards the stern, were more slave paddlers, and then a group of priests, executioners, and one or two warriors, the latter carrying muskets nearly six feet long, made in Birmingham and called “Long Danes,” of which many hundreds of thousands were annually imported into the locality.* They had flint locks, stocks painted a bright scarlet, and they cost seven shillings apiece in the metropolis of the Midlands. These were the only, though somewhat dubious signs of civilisation in the whole flotilla, which swept down on the tide noisy and clamorous as a flock of parrots flighting nestwards over the dreary flats at night.

Following a little in the rear of the general procession came a smaller canoe, full of young negro boys, with an old man in charge at the stern-paddle who seemed a sort of pedagogue, and exercised a

* See Appendix, Note 1.

rough-and-ready rule over the young subjects of his wardship, having more particularly under his eye and care a fine little savage of between ten and eleven years of age, the son of his king, who himself was too sacred a personage to come upon the errand about to be described, and who but rarely attended public sacrifices at home.

The youngster, who had a woolly head, interesting eyes, and lips like slate india-rubber, had been very anxious to join the party with his playfellows; but boys under the age of puberty were not allowed at these ceremonies, and he and his comrades had been ordered back. Jowè, however, for the boy was none other than the subject of this memoir, with childish instinct had known where to appeal, and his petitions in the proper quarter had not been without result.

“Let him go,” one of the great war-chiefs had said. “Is he not the king’s son?”

So Jowè and his friends had been allowed to follow in a small canoe in charge of the old man, who kept order among them generally and helped to steer.

But now the bank began to show upon the left, where the miles of mangroves that stretched on either flank of the water-way diminished upon that side to a few hundred yards in depth. Here and there, too, a straggling “palm-oil” palm showed its feathery crown above the other greenery, and presently the foremost canoe, turning towards these evidences of firmer land, and followed by the others, led the way up a narrow channel, the whole flotilla arriving after a course of a few hundred yards at a piece of rising ground, apparently the shore of a considerable island, past which the lesser channel ran. This curious spot was the only slice of *terra firma* for miles in some directions and hundreds of miles in others through the mangroves. It was mostly clothed in thick underbush and tangled growths of thorn and creeper, sprinkled sparsely with palms, with here and there a larger cotton-wood tree rising above the mass. Apparently it was used, and that not unfrequently, for some ceremonial purpose or other, as a broad way was kept cut and perfectly clear of bush from the oozy river bank to the summit of the plateau which had been cleared in every direction for some two hundred yards. About the centre of the clearing stood a withered solitary cotton-wood, bedaubed from the bottom of its stem upwards with alternate bands of red and white. In the background, at the edge of the bush, rose another withered tree, upon which, apparently knowing what to expect, one or two vultures were lazily perched.

As the foremost visitors approached, several large lizards scuttled from the rubbish at the bottom of the painted tree-trunk and from under the hollow log-drum which stood hard by upon two short posts. Several skulls stuck on spikes planted in the ground were scattered round it, with one or two wands, from which hung suspended a few disgusting fetish charms.

To the foot of the sacrificial tree the three girls had been half dragged, half carried, and, being now flung beside it, all the company gathered about the spot. All, that is to say, with the exception of the boys, who, if permitted to accompany the procession, were not allowed on the sacrifice ground, and though bidden to remain with the canoes, had, boy-like, as soon as the last of the men had disappeared from sight up the bank, unmoored and paddled off up the creek upon a crab-hunting expedition.

And now the horrid ceremonies commenced, the whole of the proceedings distinguished by the aimless and inconsequent nature of all negro rites.

There have been many races as cruel, some possibly more so, but never any race characterised by such a monkey-like or, rather I should say, gorilla-like and purposeless brutality as that too often displayed by the peoples of whom I write.

The Romans, for example, in times of public panic, buried people alive; they mercilessly crucified malefactors and enemies.

The Jews slew and spared not man, woman, or child, and our own northern ancestors hacked their foes up, and when caught, in their turn were themselves skinned alive with comfortable uniformity.

The Chinese are past masters in the college of torture; and, adepts as they have ever been in cruelty, the people of the East were not without their rivals in some of the noble houses of Italy in the dark ages, ay, and during the Renaissance. But with the few exceptions traceable to mental taint, all these acts, and all nations in their acts, were purposeful. Revenge, greed, hate, fear, superstition urged the deed; but not so with the negro: for him, brutal doing to death seems to have not a pleasure so much as a kind of ghastly fascination. He does not care merely to break a captive's limb, but he must mash it up. He leaves a victim half disembowelled to hack at the head, or to slice at an arm, ready then to turn grinning to a comrade at some feeble witticism, and leave the deed half done. I write with no prejudice against the negro as a negro, but simply as an observer and naturalist; and I know that what I write is absolutely correct, at any rate so far as regards a large number of the negro families, among whom certain marked physical differences are possibly the outward sign of their very marked mental differentiation from all the white races.

To go on with our story.

I have no desire to shock the reader, but truth demands that I should picture cold-blooded, ghastly horrors. I do not do so without warning.

The girls, who had been gagged in addition to being securely bound, now had the gags removed, their mouths forced open, their tongues seized with a pair of pincers, pulled out and cut off, and their cheeks slit back from the corners of their mouths almost to their ears. Some of their lashings were then unloosed, and they were reared one after another up against the tree and fastened to it by ropes, and by spikes of iron-wood and bamboo driven through their hands and feet. Previously to being fixed in position, they had been smeared with honey, and now, after other nameless atrocities, each poor victim was pierced by a long, sharp slip of bamboo thrust from side to side. A few more slashes and indignities were inflicted upon the mute, writhing bodies, and then the spectators, priests and warriors together, waited on by their slaves, sat down under their umbrellas and, while discussing the horrible sacrifices, drank palm wine and rum to intoxication.

The ceremony just gone through was intended to propitiate the evil spirits that caused drought and bad crops,* and possibly the spectators, in their way, may have felt as elevated in spirit as an average London congregation after a fashionable service of rich ceremonial and an emotional sermon. I am not scoffing. God forbid! I am only dealing with averages, and the average man is going to be damned. The gates of goodness are still as narrow as ever they were, wherefore, though I fear I am of the goats, I respect the true sheep.

The palaver came to an end presently, and the whole assembly of priests, warriors, and slaves trooped down to their canoes, and, doubtless thinking the boys had got tired of waiting and had preceded them homewards, set off up the river with the flow of the tide for their distant town, the metropolis of the Gnongo kingdom.

Jowè and his companions, however, were still higher up the creek, hunting for lampreys among the mangrove roots upon the mud banks, and occasionally getting on the dryer ground along the edge of the island, digging out the land-crabs, and stringing them with mud-crabs they had rooted out from among the mangrove stems, upon the central, wiry frond-stalks torn from the lateral leaves of a cocoanut-palm branch. They had obtained a goodly booty, for their hunting ground, if ground it could be called, was a virgin one, and very pleased with themselves at having outwitted their old tutor—an outwittal which might cost that savage his life, beaten to death with clubs upon the stomach, should the king hear of it—they got into their canoe and paddled back to where they expected to meet the seniors. At first they were frightened at their audacity when they found that all the adults of their party had disappeared, and no small dread seized them of possible consequences, but curiosity soon became their mastering passion,

* Appendix, Note 2.

and, though not without fear and trembling, they resolved to creep up and see what amazing mystery had taken place in their absence. Slowly and cautiously they stole along the broad pathway, and arrived without mishap, or sign of any other presence than themselves, in view of the scene.

There, with their black bodies sharply defined against the red and white bands of the Obi tree, hung the three girls, the crucified victims of the morning's rites. Crucified, that is to say, if such a barbarous doing to death can be called by the name of that classical form of execution!

The larger lizards, frightened from their favourite haunts where they had been wont to bask upon the naked boughs in the blazing tropical sun, were now beginning to return. A steady stream of ants went and came up and down the trunk, attracted first, like the flies, by the honey dripping from the slips of bamboo thrust through the victims from side to side below the ribs, but now bearing away each its tiny portion of human flesh. They would soon finish the task from which the vultures had been frightened by the approach of the boys, and the land-crabs would come in for the picking of the bones.

Luckily for the poor girls, their executioners had apparently desired to get as much excitement as possible out of their sacrifice in the shortest space of time, and hence the very brutality of their proceedings had been merciful; the victims had died shortly, very shortly, instead of lingering on for days as is often the case with wretched beings crucified in more orthodox manner. But it was a ghastly spectacle that the boys came back again and again to have a last look at before they could tear themselves away, a spectacle that never faded out of Jowè's memory, though for him it had in it more of attraction than repulsion, and on the following day he and other young urchins of the village re-enacted it with their little mud and wooden dolls in the forked branches of a convenient bush.

The tale of horrors, however, is not yet all told. While Jowè and his companions were occupied in copying their elders, those elders were fully engaged in further festivities of a character not uncommon in West Africa.

The crucifixion of the girls was only the beginning of three days' terrible ceremony of murder and mutilation. The first day was over, and the town was now agog and *en fête* for the second day's entertainment, namely, the decapitation of slaves and the flinging off of their heads, haphazard, to indicate the proper site for the new Juju house that the King of Gnongo had been prevailed upon by the priestly section of his subjects to build to the glory of his fathers' gods.

Crowds of people were moving about the streets and between the rows of palm-thatched mud dwellings, laughing and chattering, and generally in high animal spirits, as is common with an African crowd. Suddenly from the old Juju house came the sound of a single stroke upon the Obi drum, and as its deep peculiar tone reverberated through the place, the whole demeanour of the people changed; men, women, and children rushed into their houses, and in a few seconds the streets were absolutely deserted.

But now from the direction of the Juju house, which stood upon the outskirts of the clearing that surrounded the town in all directions in an irregular parallelogram, running back from the river some four hundred yards, there came a crowd of priests, executioners, and warriors, driving amongst them some thirty or forty slaves, men and women, naked and wretched, with their hands securely bound behind their backs. These traversed the otherwise silent and apparently deserted streets, and filing round the palace, which stood about the centre of the collection of houses and hovels I have dignified with the name of town, passed out upon the opposite side and took their way to a spot not far from the river bank and close to the further or up-stream edge of the open space. At this point the dense forest once more rose like a rampart, intersected here and there by the numerous paths that entered it in all directions and led to the various neighbouring clearings and plantations of mandioca or cassava, sweet potatoes, yams, sugar canes, bananas, and the other tropical staples of the district.

The procession halted near a medium-sized and freshly constructed grass hut on the edge of the forest, about twenty yards from which, and nearer to the town, stood a tall, newly peeled sapling, straight

and stiff, but as flexible almost as a fly-rod, and painted, like the sacrificial tree, in alternate rings of red and white.

About fifteen feet in front of this maypole-like object, and closer to the river, was what appeared to be a rude wooden chair made by planting one long stake upright in the ground, but leaving about four or five feet projecting from the surface, thus forming the apex of an acute triangle, the base of which, about eighteen inches distant, was formed by two smaller stakes, marking the two angles at either extremity. These three uprights were joined by three short pieces of wood, lashed to them and roughly forming a triangular seat. From the top of what I have likened to a maypole hung a short rope of plaited fibre, ending in a kind of stirrup or sling.

As I have said, the crowd of guards and slaves halted in the neighbourhood of the grass-built hut, and the victims, at a word from one of the priests, were made to squat in rows on one side of it. The term priest, by the way, is merely used for want of a better, the priestly office among these people corresponding more nearly with that of a medicine-man among the North American Indians than with anything of European origin.

One or two muskets were now fired as signals, and at the reports a warrior, issuing from the king's palace, began to beat a war-drum, whose rough discordant notes had hardly banged and rolled in answer to a dozen strokes before the entire population rushed into the streets, and, wildly excited, the whole gesticulating, laughing, rollicking stream of blackness poured towards the spot occupied by the group already described.

No sooner, however, had the mass of blacks been arranged in a great semicircle, with their backs towards the river and facing in upon the chair and sapling, than a dead silence fell upon them, not broken until the warriors in front leading, and the women behind clapping their hands in a monotonous beat and joining in every now and then in a quavering kind of chorus, a sort of chant was begun, varied with moans and exclamations that seemed to work them up to a frenzy of excitement and expectation.

By this time all eyes were fixed upon the little straw hut, nor had they long to wait, for out of it suddenly dashed the chief executioner, naked but for a kind of kilt or broad girdle of leopard tails, charms, shells, feathers, and plaited streamers of grass, which rattled as he ran. His black skin was streaked and patched with blotches and lines of red and white, drawn probably in rude imitation of a human being, from whom the skin and flesh had been so stripped as to show white bones and tendons here and there between the more ensanguined muscular portions. He rushed about the chair and pole, round and round, somewhat after the fashion of the figure of eight in a Highland reel, and then along the front of the people, moping, grinning, gesticulating, and brandishing in his right hand a long executioner's knife, with its brass handle and heavy conch shell, and shaking in the other a set of iron claws.

Some of the women cried out loudly at his approach, and even many of the men averted their eyes; for there was no knowing what the maddened, excited creature might do, as on these occasions the executioner is sacred, and among the mass of the people may kill with impunity and even with applause.

Suddenly he stopped stone still in front of the chair, dropped his arms to his side, and walking slowly back, disappeared in the hut.

As he disappeared, a deep sigh, as if it were of relief, burst from the spectators, whose whole attention was now concentrated upon the priests, their attendants, and the wretched group of victims. One of these was shortly seized, brought up to the chair and placed within it.

A long coir rope, with a running noose at one end, was then placed round each ankle and drawn tightly to the uprights forming two of the legs of the chair; when this had been done the ends were given to the willing hands of some of the spectators to hold. Similar ropes and nooses were then placed round the thighs of the victim and the framework on which he sat, and others round his body and shoulders and

round the upright against which he was now braced; these were similarly drawn tight and held secure. Lashed in this position, he was incapable of any movement.

Presently one of the attendants, with a long hooked stick, caught the short cord and noose that hung from the top of the sapling and drew it towards him, whereafter, with the assistance of half a dozen men from the spectators, the pole itself was drawn down like a gigantic spring or fishing rod, and the double stirrup or sling at the end slipped over the victim's head, one part passing under his chin and the other behind his ears. When these had been placed in position, the assistants carefully released their hold upon the sapling, or young tree, as perhaps it ought more properly to be called, and the wretched victim's head, without it being in his power to utter a sound, was strained, almost to breaking point, in an upward direction from his body, leaving the neck clear.

Now one of the priests began to beat a drum and another to blow a horn and rattle a bunch of sticks and charms, while the people who held the cords—men and women too—drew them tighter still.

Suddenly there was a yell from the grass hut, and the executioner, rushing forward, this time wearing upon his head a peculiarly fantastic headgear of charms and bones and other rubbish mixed with dangling gold plates and grotesque masks of thin-beaten gold, danced in a frenzy before the victim waving his arms, gesticulating, grunting, and exciting himself and the onlookers; then as suddenly he stopped, and with a single stroke of his keen and heavy sword decapitated the miserable creature in front of him. Released from the tension, the sapling sprang back, and in doing so flung the poor wretch's head behind it and away from the river and up towards the outskirts of the forest, spurting blood as it went.

Again the executioner disappeared in his hut, and the people who held the ropes, releasing their hold, tore the bleeding body from the chair and flung it at the foot of the sapling with insult and nameless mutilation, cutting and hacking at it with their knives; in these proceedings the women were not less active than the men.

Hardly had they given vent to their excitement than a fresh victim—this time a woman—was fastened in the sacrificial chair in the manner already described, and the sapling having been drawn down and secured as before, under the chin and back of the head, instantly stopped her feeble outcries. It should be said that these victims, unlike the girls crucified on the previous day, were not gagged or mutilated into quiet, and some of them sat awaiting their doom with a sullen silence that almost amounted to indifference.

Once more the executioner rushed out, again the ghastly performance was gone through, again the released sapling flung its head to a distance, spurting the blood far and near, and again, with hideous mutilation and indignity, the victim's body was half dragged, half carried to the spot where its predecessor lay, and thrown upon it.

Again and again was the scene repeated in all its ghastly details, the crowd becoming more and more excited as more and more of their number actually participated in the doing to death of their victims. The pile of bodies increased; the obscene and cruel fancies of their insulters growing as action lent exuberance to their imagination.

At length, halting before one of his victims, instead of decapitating her, the executioner began a monotonous chant, in which the priests joined, exalting his prowess in head-cutting, and challenging any one of the spectators to rivalry, warning him and the crowd at the same time of the penalty in case of failure.

As he chanted, a young warrior, mad with the sights he had witnessed and eager for distinction, stepped forward and signified his desire to show his skill. The executioner looked at him for a moment, then seized him by the arm and hurried him to his hut, whence the youth presently emerged, naked and daubed with paint, and carrying in his hand a heavy sword similar to that used by his mentor.

The executioner himself did not appear.

Trembling and frantic with excitement, the novice danced about, and finally, at a single blow, though not so cleanly as the old hand, severed the neck, when the head, as hitherto, flew through the air to fall as before.

A hoarse roar of approval rose from the crowd, and the rope holders grew almost frantic over their treatment of the body till it was finally hustled upon the rapidly growing heap beside the pole. The regular executioner now came forward, seized the lucky amateur by the elbow and led him to his hut, alongside of which the latter squatted down, but hardly had he done so ere another victim was in place, and leaving the hut the executioner once more performed his office so skilfully that the uproar of approval at his exhibition of deftness almost rivalled that which had just greeted the youth's maiden effort.

Another victim was soon in place; again a young warrior assayed his chance and was successful, though the head, not completely severed, was in reality rather torn off by the elasticity of the spring pole than clean cut.

At this the crowd growled its disapproval, and the young man slunk back among them, safe, but in disgrace.

Yet another victim was soon in the fatal chair, and the executioner, rushing wildly about, harangued all, without distinction of sex. Hardly had he ceased before a fine, burly negress, insane with excitement, sprang forward in answer and claimed her right of trial. The executioner smiled grimly, and handing her a weapon, whose edge she was foolish enough not to test, or too elated to think of observing, retired to the door of his hut.

The woman seemed for a moment almost to repent of the position in which she had placed herself, but only for an instant, for, after a frantic dance in front of the victim, she cut with all her strength at his neck. There was no question as to the vigour of the blow, but the direction was not correct; and though the stroke fell little short of severing the neck and left shoulder from the body, it did not cut through sufficiently to allow the sapling to act, the jerk nearly releasing the cords. Almost before an uninitiated spectator could have told what had happened, the executioner rushed forward, and, striking the woman's head from her body at a single cut, retired almost as rapidly as he had advanced. Straightway the whole crowd, with a roar of rage, fell upon the unskilful woman's carcass and that of her badly killed victim, now pitched from his seat, and hurried both with every indignity to the pile of corpses.

But enough of what could be a monotonous repetition of horrors. Suffice it to say, that late in the day the people dispersed; the executioner disappeared into his hut; the priests, after holding consultation among the scattered heads, settled finally upon the site, and marked out the holes for the new Juju house; there slaves were set to dig, and afterwards to haul in the log pillars, and make other preparations for the morrow.

Then after the heads had been collected into a heap and covered over, and the vultures had come down in clouds to gorge themselves at the corpse heap, the town settled down for a rest, to be followed during the earlier part of the night by a wild orgie of drinking and bestiality not here to be described.

God's stars came out and paled and passed away before the fair young moon; His winds went to the sea, and the cry of all His creatures rose to Him through the great African forests, seeking each his food and prey from God. To Him from amid all the carnage of nature, from every tooth and talon that she swayed, came no appeal against cruelty; for cruelty loses its name and meaning when it becomes necessity, and none blame the hungry when they eat.

Man only it is who commits evil not from his necessities, but from a devilish delight in the trespass.

Early though it was usually wont to arise, the town, as a whole, lay late after the riot and dissipation of the preceding night.

A few children, and one or two girls sent out to fetch water, and certain slaves were the first astir.

Jowè and some companions were also among the early risers. A drink of goat's milk and a piece of cassava cake, given the boy by his old attendant slave woman, satisfied his hungry little princship at dawn, and he sallied forth from the back of the palace and joined his playfellows, who had come together by twos and threes from the collection of houses belonging to the various war chiefs that lay scattered behind the royal edifice, and practically within the royal inclosure.

Having no need to spend a moment on their toilets—for hitherto they had never insulted their persons with a scrap of clothing—and burning with curiosity, they slipped out between the palisades, passed through the surrounding streets and on towards the scene of the previous day's butchery.

They had not been actually forbidden to visit it, but Obi and Juju and other terms were words of fearful import, and carried with them dangers of an appalling and unknown kind which they had seen practically illustrated in the case of many a poor slave and socially inferior transgressor.

But it being still so early that scarcely anybody was about, they had the place to themselves, except for the vultures, flocks of which had roosted in the neighbourhood, and were now stretching their wings preparatory to a new descent upon the corpse heap.

The boys inspected the hut, the spring pole, the chair, and the whole apparatus of slaughter, and noted the different articles down for future imitation and employment in their play. But now as they moved about they came upon the pile of heads carefully covered with branches, with matting thrown over all. Some of the band had climbed to the top and were sitting upon the heap, when one curious young monkey, lifting a corner of the matting and parting the branches, peered beneath, and seeing of what the pile consisted, laughed and told his comrades up above. These climbed down in great haste, for they well knew that the heads were sacred, kept for further mysterious and sanguinary ceremonials, and not things lightly to be sat upon. Leaving the heads hurriedly, they wandered on a few yards to where six heaps of freshly turned earth masked six oblong pits, about seven feet long by three feet broad and four feet deep, and six great posts lying ready to be set up in them. In the space roughly inclosed by these excavations was another hole of irregular shape but somewhat deeper.

For what purpose the logs were there they could not exactly tell, but knowing that they were Juju, and not to be meddled with, they passed them by, and, entering the forest, went down a path which led among the mangroves to a spot where the river made a turn, which bend, at high tide, was one of their favourite fishing places for crabs, prawns, crayfish, lampreys, oyster-fish, and other denizens of the teeming swamps.

Here we will leave them and return to the town, just waking into life and, if one can say so of such a place and people, gaiety.

Like Jowè and his little friends, the adults had now broken their fast, and almost equally artless as to toilet matters, had come to the doors of their houses, and were sitting or lounging about, in the open in some cases, but among the better houses, under the verandahs. Women squatted at the corners of the streets with baskets of produce; some few makeshift shops were open, and considerable chaffering was going on, principally in vegetables and such "oilman's" stores as salt shark, dried prawns and cuttlefish, and dried rats skewered upon pieces of wood or slips of bamboo. There was not so much trading, however, as might have been expected, for the town was merely the king's royal residence, and not one of the great trade centres. Here the few traders were practically purveyors, dependants and hangers-on of the court, and the population consisted almost entirely of the king's warriors, their wives and children, and a great body of slaves kept for purposes of labour and human sacrifice.

The King of Gngongo ruled a small but powerful and very populous country, and was the terror of all his neighbours to the north and west by reason of the number and ferocity of the slave raids that started from his dominions, and were almost invariably successful. The whole religion of these people necessitated attacks upon their neighbours, for its basis was constant human sacrifice, and the simple law of

self-preservation taught the Gnongos, for their own safety, always to keep at hand a goodly supply of the necessary victims. The true history of the place would be a dismal record of ruthless and brutal doing to death of human beings, often apparently for no reason whatever except to satisfy a ghoulish craving for the sight of human blood flowing fresh, or blackening clotted and nasty in the open, in the town, in street, in square, in courtyard—nay, upon the very household utensils themselves.

On this, the third day, were to be erected with all the proper ceremonies the six main uprights of the new Juju house. The reason, or even the simple mythology of these acts, it is hopeless to expect; one might as well hope to learn the mythology of monkeys; though verily, I believe, the daily annals of a collection of the higher quadrumana would be more sane and cleanly and far less bloodthirsty than those of the baser, lower bimana.

But now it was time for things to begin, and as etiquette, dangerous to evade, constrained all to take part in the ceremonies fasting, so far as a solid meal was concerned, all real eating and drinking had to be deferred till the proceedings of the day were concluded.

There appeared to be no regular commencement, but, seemingly by a kind of general impulse, drums began to be beaten, horns blown, and trade muskets discharged in the air. Then cows' horns, filled with powder and tamped with clay, were fired off with a thundering report and considerable danger to the neighbours, and, with the exception of the king, who practically never appeared in public, and of his immediate attendants, the whole population of the town flocked to the spot where the ghastly preparations were already well advanced.

The priests and warriors and women gathered in a great circle round the pits; the slaves who had carried the victims from the town, bound hand and foot to poles and rolled in cheap calico, at a sign came forward and laid them two and two beside each excavation, one man and one woman to each. Cutting the lashings that secured them to the poles, they took these away. Then one of the priests began a sort of exhortation to the people, telling them that the king had graciously given orders for the erection of a new Juju house, which would be for the general benefit; then, after animadverting upon the crucifixions of the young women that had taken place two days previously for the prevention of famine and drought, he referred to the head-cutting of the day before, and declared that the auguries drawn from the positions in which the heads had fallen had been most favourable, that the posts of the Juju house were about to be set up in accordance with them, that the heads would be fixed upon the building, and would bring great luck, and, to prevent and minimise occurrences of such evil omen for the coming year, those women who had born twins in his majesty's dominions during the year gone by would now be buried alive in the hole in the centre of the house, over which, when a proper dwelling-place had been provided, a most powerful Juju would preside. He ended by saying that the king had given orders for a great feast to conclude the three days' proceedings, and that his royal bounty had provided for his people a more than usually liberal dole of rum and palm wine.

He finished amid the frantic applause of the crowd and more discharging of muskets and banging of drums.

Now the warriors got into some sort of order in front and began to chant a monotonous song or hymn, to which the women marked a rude time by grunting at regular intervals and slapping their arms, breasts, and thighs.

While this hideous anthem was being sung, the executioner and his assistants seized the victims two and two as they lay, male and female, and binding them face to face, pitched each couple into the long holes lying ready excavated beside them. This done, he and his daubed and painted assistants, in all their disgusting paraphernalia of charms and bones, began to dance about the pits, rattling hollow calabashes full of small nuts and seeds, and partially drowning the groans and screams of agony that proceeded from the wretched beings below.

But now arose the cry of "Rice-pounders! Women! O women, bring your rice-pounders! Let the family be fruitful and the year give many slaves! Women! O women, bring your rice-pounders!"

These words were shouted and yelled by the warriors, but promptly taken up by the whole crowd, which, wild with excitement, began to stamp and dance with gyratory motion about the spot occupied by the executioner and his assistants.

Several scores of women had rushed off to the town at the first words, and were now streaming back, each one armed with her rice-pounder, of hard, heavy wood, about three inches in diameter and six feet long, shod with iron at the lower end. As they came up they were speedily arranged in rows round the pits, and at a given cry from the warriors and the crowd of "Now, O women, pound the sacred rice to feed the gods!" they commenced pounding away with their formidable rammers at the wretched creatures below.

The piercing shrieks that immediately rent the air soon ceased, and soon, save for a low groan or two, no sound rose from the blood-stained mortars except the monotonous beat-beat of the horrid pestles.

But while the women pounded, the people and the executioners yelled and danced till the excitement attained a frantic pitch. Then, suddenly closing in, the crowd seized the great pillars lying on the ground, hoisted them up by main force of arm, and, planting each one in the centre of the gory mass below, filled in the loose earth and stones about them.*

Not till the earth was packed hard round the pillars and level with the surface of the surrounding soil did the women cease their ghastly labour. Then they stopped, exhausted, and rolled about, many of them apparently afflicted with a species of epileptic frenzy.

At once each became the centre of an admiring circle, for their frenzy was a sign of good omen, a sign that the sacrifice had been accepted with pleasure by the gods, whose spokeswomen they had now become, for the time being, at least.

After a while things quieted down; the crowd once more became attentive, for the final ceremony was at hand. As already mentioned, another pit had been excavated in the centre of the pillars, now so firmly erected. Alongside this centre hole, a dozen or more miserable women were dragged. These were the unfortunates who had given birth to twins during the previous year in the king's dominions, and so brought evil upon it.† One of the priests gave the people his views upon the subject, views that will hardly bear reproduction in these pages, and then the executioner, carrying an iron bar about two feet long, and followed by his assistants rolling a short thick log, threw the women down one after another, and, deliberately smashing their arms and legs in two places, doubled them up behind them and flung the poor creatures into the hole.

Not a sound broke the silence, save the screams of the unfortunate victims of this horrible cruelty, and as soon as the last of them had been pitched, shrieking, into the pit, the earth was filled in over them while they were still alive, and with a wild shout the whole body of spectators rushed in and commenced stamping it flat with their feet. In a very short time all trace of the excavation had disappeared, and the whole space inclosed by the uprights, and even several feet beyond them, was tramped smooth and flat and hard as a threshing floor.

No one passing could have guessed at the terrible crimes which had been committed, for hardly a splash of blood upon the pillars gave evidence of them.

With firing of muskets, blowing of horns, and general congratulations and jollity, with praises, yelled and chanted, of the goodness of their king and his liberality, the crowd returned to the town, the women to prepare the evening meal and make such festive arrangements as were demanded by the king's orders,

* Appendix, Note 3.

† Appendix, Note 4.

the men to talk over the day's celebrations, plan future schemes of blood and rapine, and discuss the next slave-catching expedition, all separating later on to secure betimes the royal dole of drink.

I have described the day, the night I will leave to the reader's imagination and to its fitting veil of darkness.

CHAPTER II.

FOR miles and miles to the right and left the great rollers, rising and running in under the last efforts of the mighty Atlantic surge, lifting their crests one after another, hurled themselves ceaselessly upon the sand and coral of the shore.

There was no haven or entry for fifty miles on either side save over the bar of the great river, where, upon the right bank facing the sea, had been established the Mission station, the schools, and the central establishment of the diocese.

Westeria it was called, like the town itself, which lay, white and glistening in the morning sun, on the other side of the stream, here about two miles and a half in width.

A noble water-way it was once the bar was passed; and at high tide even steamers of fair size could run over its treacherous shifting sands, and find secure and convenient berths alongside the wharves and jetties that lined the shore on the commercial side of the river.

From a distance, especially from the sea, the town of Westeria appeared as if it had been built of candied sugar, or rather, of the icing from some gigantic cake; for the white shell chunam, or lime, with which the more pretentious dwellings had been plastered, glistened and sparkled in the fierce sun with a glaring whiteness all the more dazzling when contrasted with the polished blackness of the majority of the inhabitants.

A fine fort stood close upon the shore at the junction of the river and the salt water; it had been slightly modernised and somewhat strengthened and armed according to more modern notions than those of its original builders, but none the less it still preserved sufficient of its early architectural embellishment to make it more a thing of beauty than a fortification usually is in our utilitarian days.

A broad berm ran round it, quaintly carved and moulded in stucco; to some of the bastion angles still clung the remains of quaint gargoyles, and several of the projecting sentry-boxes were curious and not unpicturesque in their unusual variety of shape and ornamentation. From the main guard, itself protected in the orthodox fashion of the days of Vauban, ran a broad causeway, paved with coral blocks, which, after making a wide sweep on either side round a lofty lighthouse rising from the centre of the circle so formed, ended on the lower high road of the terraced town.

The hospital, the Houssa barracks, the Government House, and the English church were all conspicuous objects, and though the streets were narrow and ill laid out, as was only to be expected from a place originally founded and long maintained by the Portuguese, it was not unpicturesque, and British sanitary arrangement and police supervision had at least done something to render safer and less unhealthy a spot that under no circumstances could be reckoned among the most salubrious in the world.

Straggling more or less irregularly round the better-built houses, and stretching away southwards down the coast for some considerable distance, was the native town, mud-walled and thatched with palm leaves, with little gardens tacked on to most of the dwellings, the gardens fringed towards the sea with cocoanut palms, starred and sprinkled nearer the huts with clumps of cactus, straight "palm oil" palms, collections of coffee bushes, euphorbias, crotons, and pepper trees, and trailed over, on bamboo hedge and split-palm trellis, by straggling gourds and sweet potato convolvulus, with here and there a real pepper or Indian beetle vine creeping up the stem of bread fruit, jack, or mango.

It was a large town, containing many thousands of souls, mixed as the vegetation, though the pure blacks exceeded the pure whites in the proportion of a hundred to one, and surrounded on all sides by dense tropical forest, which in many places advanced its outposts to within a quarter of a mile of the houses.

The coast line for some distance in the neighbourhood of the town was fringed with cocoanut palms, and luckily bare of mangroves, which began a league or two up the river, and thence for many hundred miles followed its course and spread to right and left.

The Mission of Westeria had a local centre in the town itself, but the schools and headquarters, as I have said, were wisely situated at the point on the opposite side of the stream where sea and river met.

This point was merely an island of some four or five square miles in extent, with low sandy soil, covered only with a scattered scrub jungle; beyond it ran another branch of the river, or rather, it would have done so had it not been choked with mangroves near the island; the stream itself found its way to the sea over a shallow bar several miles to the northward.

At the Mission college were some hundred male students, while under the charge of the wife of one of the missionaries, who acted as principal, were the Mission female schools, containing about one hundred and seventy girls. The schools had a high reputation; and not only from the neighbourhood, but from considerable distances up and down the coast they attracted scholars, the majority of whom, in the case of the males, intended to enter the ministry, a profession which always seems to have a peculiar fascination for the educated or semi-educated negro.

It was a lovely morning, and mail day. The morning gun had been fired, and the call of the early bugles came faint but clear with the land wind from across the river.

The Rev. Arnalf Steinwein put down his cup of coffee. He had had his bath, and now in his white cotton suit he looked clean and pure and high-souled enough for the noblest or the most desperate enterprise—in his case synonymous terms. Presently he sighed; his thoughts had gone back to his native Hanover and to a certain flaxen-haired, blue-eyed Fraülein Essen.

He took a letter from his pocket. Gertrude was now twenty-two, and, like many other of her compatriots, was about to leave her paternal home for a situation as governess in England.

Gertrude and Arnalf had an understanding, and when the fates allowed, Arnalf was to go home for her, or she was to come out to him. Gertrude was very pretty, and simply brought up, and she was going to rich and corrupting England.

Arnalf did not like it, but there it was, and so, being a wise man, he again turned his attention, after another sigh or two, to a matter more immediately in hand.

Moreover, this was strange enough and important enough to have occupied all his attention and put, for the time being, every thought of Gertrude out of his head.

Certainly no member of the staff of the Mission schools and college had thought or talked or dreamed of much else since it was sprung upon them.

A couple of days previously, the Rev. Abel Sabine, chief missionary and principal of the college, had been astonished by one of the fishermen rushing up from the shore and bursting breathlessly into his class-room with the news that some half-dozen canoes, filled with war chiefs and attendants, were approaching from across the river. Further, he added, they were, from the shape of their canoes and other signs, a party of warriors of the dreaded Gnongo tribe.

As the principal rose from his seat and went to the door to look out for the strangers, his informant vanished into the bush, and with him went most of the native servants and hangers-on, men, women, and children diving like dabchicks into the surrounding undergrowth of scrub jungle, and being seen no more.

The principal was not himself greatly alarmed at the visit; he also noticed that the flotilla of canoes was coming straight across the river and not down the stream, and as their appearance in broad daylight showed that on this occasion, at any rate, the intentions of the dreaded warriors were not warlike, a moment's thought convinced him that there was no real danger; certainly the idea of a warlike demonstration down at Westeria at any time was hardly to be dreamed of.

But now the canoes had arrived at the shore, and Mr. Sabine, a brave man and skilled linguist, went down at once to meet them with several of his colleagues, and found the party accompanied by an official from the Governor of Westeria, who explained the object of their visit, and added, that as in its nature it had to do with the Mission, he had brought the envoys over so that the principal might deal with them directly.

On the worthy missionary greeting the warriors in their own language, an old war chief, who appeared to be the head of the party, told the missionary that their king, wishing to gain the advantages of an English education for his son, had charged them to ask for a teacher to be sent back with them to his capital to fetch the young prince down; that the king had taken careful advice in this matter, that all the omens were propitious, and that on the second day they would like an answer, meanwhile, they would be of trouble to nobody, but would encamp upon the shore and await quietly the reply of the white Juju man.

To say that the Reverend Mr. Sabine and his friends were astonished, would be to put the matter very mildly indeed. The tribe represented before him was far from being the most respectable up the great river, on one of whose branches it had settled down—very far indeed; and only two years before certain of its raiding parties had most cruelly sacked and destroyed several of the outlying trading villages of the tribe most contiguous to the colony.

However, he made them welcome, assigned them quarters and abundant provision and necessities, clean water-pots and a separate water-supply, and retired to talk over the matter with his colleagues.

It need hardly be said that “in Reuben there were great searchings of heart.”

The King of Gnongo had a very evil-smelling reputation in the nostrils of many; he was not only an abomination, but feared; and here was this crocodile asking for a missionary. Was Saul also among the prophets, or was it but some device of the devil, who, by means of the Juju priests, wished to get hold of a missionary, or for that matter, of any respectable white man for some special Juju feast—foulness in itself and leading to torture and a hideous death? But it was a call, an undoubted call, one that could not be gainsaid. Wherefore, to cut a long matter short, for there was much discussion, Arnalf's offer—he, being the only unmarried missionary at the station, had volunteered to go—was thankfully accepted, and with a few wandering and occasionally recurring qualms about the business, and a few thoughts of his Gertrude, who, as we have said, was going to England, his brief preparations had been made, and in spotless white he was ready for the journey and the sacrifice, or a triumphant return with the young prince, as the case might be.

He would not be long away, said the messengers, as the king was anxious for his son to commence his education at once; and so, with many recommendations from Mr. Sabine to the old war chief in command of the party—for Arnalf was not yet very proficient in the Gnongo dialect—that self-same day, after sunset and the evening meal, the prows of the great canoes were turned eastwards, and, with a flowing tide, the expedition started upon its return voyage up the river.

A little shelter of bent boughs covered with matting had been set up for Arnalf's benefit almost at the stern of the largest canoe. Some rough boards placed upon sticks in the bottom of the dug-out kept him dry from any water that might be washing about, and some soft matting took away their hardness. With his few simple belongings about him and one or two packages of presents for the monarch he was going to visit, Arnalf made himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit, and for the time being had his attention fully occupied by the novel position in which he found himself.

The stars were coming out, and their faint reflections upon the water shone with a soft, gemmy light, shifting and changing as the great canoe, thrust forwards by the tide and urged by the strong arms of its paddlemen, leaped on and on into the dark shadows of the river.

For some time the missionary meditated upon the scene in a half-dreamy state, almost unconscious of his surroundings, but suddenly, as he felt himself nodding off to sleep, a sense of duty came upon him,

and, arousing himself with a start, he lighted a candle in a small lantern and proceeded to read part of the evening service and the evening lessons for the day.

His doings were watched with intense interest by many pairs of eyes, an interest not unmixed with awe, and when, in spite of his shyness under their scrutiny and a certain fear of misconstruction, he put his books down, and kneeling as best he could at the entrance to his shelter, prayed, as was his wont, long and fervently for help and guidance in this curious errand upon which he was embarked, the whole flotilla grunted an approval. They understood enough of his actions from what they had seen, or heard by report, to know that they had got hold of a white Juju man of the first water, and by a strange twist of reasoning these bloodthirsty savages felt themselves better and safer through the night for the presence of this non-slaying, gentle creature than they would have been for the company of twenty additional war canoes.

It was not mere convenience that led them to commence their journey during the night and do their utmost to put in a long spell of paddling before they halted, for many another stream ran into the main river up which lay their course, and bitterly hostile tribes might have heard of their passing downwards to the sea and been on the look-out for them in overwhelming numbers upon their return. Between the different little kingdoms of the neighbourhood there was literally many an ancient bone to pick. One tribe was especially feared, being cannibals, in addition to having several other specially uncomfortable qualifications, and when the flotilla swept in the darkness without challenge past the mouth of the stream that led up to their country, the reputation of the sleeping and unconscious Arnalf rose still higher. Almost immediately after his devotions he had fallen into a deep slumber and so lay peacefully through the night, during the long hours of which, meanwhile, with but short spells of relaxation, the strong-armed canoemen had steadily driven their craft towards the certain shelter and safety which they were so anxious to gain.

But now the dawn was breaking, and strange and ghostly at first came the arrows of the sun through the white mists—the beautiful poisonous veil of Her Highness Queen Malaria, whose fantastic wreaths and lifting, folding flowers of fog melted away before the rays of the rising orb of day. The river had somewhat narrowed, and as the light grew stronger the yellow waters flashed back a dazzling gleam and glare, and even in the early morning the agitated air danced and shimmered over the glancing surface until the eye, quickly wearied with the dazzle, was glad to turn for relief to the deep green fringe of forest trees that rose on either bank. Here and there appeared a strip of white sand or a little sandy islet between the water and the woodlands, here ringed with rows of feathery palm, there caught in the embraces of a venturous mangrove, yonder supporting the weight of cotton-wood or ceiba that rose strangely out of a waste of putrefying ooze.

Arnalf still slept peacefully, till at a little after six, when the sun was beginning to be unpleasantly strong, the leading canoe of the flotilla turned sharply to the left, and, followed by the others, made apparently for the shore; on getting quite close to it, however, an opening disclosed itself behind a patch of mangroves where a narrow but deep stream entered the main river. Up this creek they paddled silently for some distance, till a moderately sized clearing suddenly appeared upon the right; near the bank stood one or two sheds covered with galvanized iron, and a small house built partly in native and partly in European fashion. The sheds were apparently empty, and nobody appeared about save an old negress, who hobbled chattering down to the water's edge to receive the visitors. Arnalf had awakened suddenly when the course of the canoes had been altered, as one often does when the direction of a vessel in which one is travelling is changed, and was, on landing, placed in the woman's charge with many orders and recommendations.

In this resting-place we will for the present leave him, attended by the old dame, while the canoemen and warriors ate and drank and slept after their night's exertions, and give the reader some explanation

regarding the spot in which he was, and the reasons that led to the savage King of the Gnongo tribe sending for a missionary.

Scattered here and there through Africa, and indeed through most uncivilised spots upon our globe, are some very queer Englishmen. They are generally fragments of drift-wood, so to speak, and have come more by accident and bad manners into their present somewhat dubious position than by any course or career common or open to members of more respectable but less interesting professions. They are usually educated, often well educated, and occasionally of gentle birth. Some kink in their nature, some love trouble, some sudden crime or excess, or the gradual development and continuance of a kindred cause, swiftly or slowly it may be, thrusts them beyond the pale of more conventional civilisation, and makes them the advisers, factotums, premiers, ministers of finance or trade, or general agents of some savage potentate. They are a curious study, old or young, and in their way are often builders of the empire, unconscious, it is true, but none the less workers, humble workers in the great scheme whereof, as a rule, men's eyes have only sight for the more glittering and ornamental figures. The bricks, the cement, the stones, the mortar are less insistent but often more worthy of philosophic consideration than the gilded weather-cock upon tower and turret and the stucco twiddlings and carvings over arch and entrance.

Mr. Smith was of this curious class of waifs of the empire. Smith was not his name, no one ever knew what it really was, but he answered to the sturdy cognomen he had assumed, and for all purposes of identification that was sufficient.

It were needless to go through the history of events which led to Smith's particular drift into the regions and good graces of the King of Gnongo; suffice it that shortly before the period of which I am writing, Smith was blood-brother and all in all, so far as externals were concerned, to that dusky potentate.

He received the king's gold-dust, ivory, gums, and other valuables, and transmitted them to the coast; saw to their proper disposal with due deduction of commission for himself, and purchased such necessities and luxuries as his employer required, again upon commission. Equally with the king he objected to pay the heavy duties placed by the authorities upon spirits. Smith was a man of resource, he established depôts and secret stores cunningly contrived in one or two out-of-the-way places, and so organised matters that the King of Gnongo always had trade spirit and to spare, and hence, as African potentates go, was always rich and able to command supplies of all kinds, with unhesitating allegiance from his warriors and abundant raw material of slaves for human sacrifice. Smith was a rare organiser, a diplomatist of the first water; he was ever able to serve the king, and yet be upon the most friendly terms with the priests and Juju men; in fact, he was a bit of a Juju man himself. Smith believed in polygamy. Strange to say, he had no children; this at times was a grief to him and to his collective wife. Poor fellow! he had one failing—he drank dreadfully upon occasion; but I think the reader will pardon him when he learns that this habit arose from his hatred of unnecessary bloodshed and the purposeless sacrifice and destruction of valuable assets that might have brought in ready money, or been otherwise turned to good account in useful manual labour. When a Juju sacrifice, such as I have tried to describe in the preceding chapter, was in swing, Smith retired to one of his trading stations and drank himself silly. This, I think, showed some lingering remnants of grace in him, though possibly some of my readers may not agree with me. Smith's mind was greatly concerned as to the future of his people by adoption. What was to become of the tribe after he had gone? He was getting old, that is to say, he was dying *de facto* an old, though yet actually a comparatively young man; nearly all such Smiths do, and he often discussed the matter with his royal master. The future of Jowè was almost always the subject of conversation.

"Jowè," said Smith, "must be educated, properly educated; you must part with him for a time and let him go to England."

The king did not like parting with his son, and though often on the point of falling in with Smith's arrangements and agreeing, always withdrew at the last moment. But his adviser brought him to the point

time after time, and fired his imagination with the glorious position that his son might take up. Some day, were he only properly educated, he would be able to manufacture gunpowder, load cartridges, take to pieces and put together a machine gun, make charcoal-steel and forge superior weapons, and even set up a little iron foundry and cast small cannon.

Smith's idea was to send him home and apprentice him, through the mediation of some West African trading house, with a good firm of practical engineers.

"After a few years' hard grinding in mechanics," he thought, "he will learn all about the manufacture of arms and ammunition, and then we shall see what we shall see." But Smith knew well the hopelessness of playing any tricks with his own countrymen on the coast or trespassing upon their possessions, and always saw that the king, except for occasional indiscretions in matters pertaining to the Excise, kept upon the best of terms, though very distant ones, with the white authorities on the seaboard.

"A white man," said he, "you cannot fight; leave the shadow for the substance, acknowledge him your over-lord, get all you can out of him, for he is quite ready to assure you something for keeping on your good behaviour, and in your hinterland you have sufficient empire to conquer to satisfy the most ambitious black Napoleon."

Thus spake Smith, the diplomatist, and the king and his advisers listened to him with approval, and acted upon his teaching, and he and all his chiefs were determined that Jowè should have a real good English education on the lines set out by the only Englishman with whom they had any dealings, and the imaginations of whose heart coincided exactly with their own.

Jowè was to be a great war chief; there was no question of that. But when? Week by week, and year by year, the decision was postponed, till one day, after a more than usually bloody Juju sacrifice and a consequent more deep and prolonged burst of drinking on the part of Smith, that worthy passed whither "beyond these voices there is peace," and had a gorgeous burial *à la* Gnongo, with such accompaniment of blood and bestiality as, to do his memory justice, he living, had always abhorred. He was really missed and mourned for by his master and by his black brothers, and the whole tribe showed their grief in their own peculiar and vigorous way at the expense, among others, of poor, collective Mrs. Smith.

Some months later, as the result of a long palaver between the king and his chiefs, which was encouraged by propitious omens from the Juju house, that potentate determined to send to the coast for a white teacher to come and take possession of his precious son; for he would fain hand him over personally to a white man, trusting to have him thoroughly educated in the only fashion in which, judging rightly so far as his experience went, it was possible for a white man to be educated.

Arnalf, whom we left to the kindly offices of the old woman at one of the trade stores of the late lamented Smith, resumed his place in the principal canoe in the evening, when the whole flotilla set out once again upon their journey. He had amused himself as best he might through the day, and not having been up into the interior of the country before, found ample matter to employ a well-educated and well-stored mind.

His companions had eaten a good meal in the early part of the day shortly after landing, and had then gone off to sleep, lying like logs inside and about the sheds; they had awakened some time after midday, strolled listlessly about for a bit, then had another good feed and gone to sleep again, till, ere night fell, arousing themselves once more, they had their evening meal and embarked.

The night passed much as the first. Arnalf went through his devotions as before, and as before to the intense gratification of his companions, though any real danger of their being interfered with was now practically past; and after meditation upon his curious position and upon the mixture of deference, respect, kindness, and familiarity with which his savage companions treated him, he dozed off and slept as soundly as he did on the first night, though possibly with more comfort; for now his sleep was not the

result of over-wrought nervous tension, but simply the kind and natural weariness resulting from fresh air and a whole day spent in the open.

About midnight the canoes ran alongside a small sandy islet, and the crews disembarked and showed their sense of security by fearlessly building fires and resting by them. Arnalf was given the choice of remaining in the vessel, or of having a mat brought up near one of the fires for him to rest upon; but he chose to stay in the canoe, which was then drawn up close to the bank and carefully secured by paddles thrust deep into the sand upon the farther side. Here he lay and dozed and watched the curious collection of figures round the several camp fires, till one by one they too lay down, and the whole of them, masters and men, apparently dropped off into slumber. Sound sleep, however, had gone from him, and through the early hours of the morning he merely lay and dozed.

At about four o'clock the camp was again astir, a slight meal was eaten, and the flotilla started in broad daylight, taking advantage of the tide now running strongly up the river. After paddling for about a couple of hours the canoes turned sharp to the right and plunged into a narrow tunnel-like opening among the mangroves, leaving the broad sunlit river behind them. On either side the arched roots rose out of many feet of stagnant, yeasty water or sprang wet and slimy from fathomless depths of putrescent ooze. Above these rose a mass of whitish stems crowned by inter-lacing branch and leathery olive-green foliage which shut out the sunshine, each limb sending down shoots to take fresh root in the slime below. Sickening exhalations broke from the bubbles stirred to being by the thrust and draw of the paddles, and as the gurgling wash lapped among the oyster-studded roots, scores of loathsome crabs scurried across the miry tentacles of the trees or faced the canoes with one big red nipper held threateningly in the air. So many there were of them, and so fierce they seemed, that it appeared as though anyone who fell overboard would be eaten alive. The atmosphere was almost unbreathable, heavy and full of steam, and foul with odours of rotting mud and decomposing leaves.

After two hours in this mangrove waste the flotilla slipped out of the leafy tunnel once more into the sun glare, which, in the sudden transition from gloom to brightness, dazzled Arnalf's eyes so that at first he saw but indistinctly. The canoes now held their way up a broad river reach, and the missionary, lying in the shade of his cabin of mats and sticks, watched the gorgeous tropic panorama as it shifted and grew and changed before him. Here was a bank of sweltering mud, along which tall, bare-throated storks waded with the ooze bubbling round their spidery legs; there, an island-like track of firm earth rose out of the swamps, and a forest of giant cotton-woods rolled away inland, while a fringe of stately palms cast the reflection of their curving fronds upon the glistening river. Now and then they passed an islet covered with palms and gorgeous-hued creepers where the crimson spikes of the pineapples shone among the tall white lilies and yellow reeds about the water's edge.

Soon they were drawing near to the king's country and getting among friends; later on they came up with canoe after canoe, sliding down the stream; here, a tiny craft, eighteen inches wide, paddled by a woman with little on her naked skin beyond a few strings of beads; there, unwieldy vessels forty feet long by seven feet broad, hollowed out of single logs of the cotton-wood tree, with crews of naked slaves bending over fantastically carved leaf-shaped paddles.

At length they reached a halting place, and, pushing close in, landed at a large native village upon the bank. It was of the usual type—a circle containing several rows of mud-walled and palm-thatched huts, standing beneath a cluster of the feathery palms themselves, with the forest for background and walling in the whole scene. There were patches of cassava with yams and bananas in front; the air was heavy with the scent of orange flowers and the odour of burning wood, while, outside the huts, groups of women were busy pounding up maize and cassava into the starchlike masses they called "kuse-kuse." The men were mostly naked; huge, muscular fellows, ebony-black in colour, their splendid chests and arms covered with quaint devices tattooed in relief; and their hair knotted up into innumerable plaits.

The leader in charge of the flotilla, as was apparent to Arnalf, was evidently a man of great importance, for, on his approaching, everyone came to meet him with the utmost deference, and every preparation that could be suggested by rude hospitality was made for their reception. Hence, after food and rest, the journey was continued; for the king's orders were urgent, and the party was evidently expected.

Once more the flotilla got under weigh, passing through a comparatively dry country—dry, that is to say, for the Niger delta, where a three-thousand-ton steamer may travel for days in and out of winding creeks with her yard-arms brushing the mangroves on either bank, and not pass a foot of firm earth—nothing but wastes of rotting mud and dismal swamp.

At last the sun dipped, and as darkness settled down with tropic suddenness, the heat increased, if such a thing were possible, while dense clouds of vapour rose from the oily water and mingled with the fever damp which rolled out of the reeking forest, until it seemed as though the world was wrapped in steam. It appeared almost impossible to go on, but the steersmen and leaders of the party knew their way well, for progress was maintained without a check. Sleep, however, was out of the question for Arnalf, as the mist made breathing difficult, and legions of bloodthirsty mosquitos settled on every exposed patch of skin and even bored through his thin clothes. In spite of the light of a quarter moon there was nothing to be seen but clammy mist, out of which rose, at intervals, the shrill scream of a hunting leopard, the splash of an alligator along the edge of a mud bank, and mysterious rustlings and crashings from the invisible forest beyond.

It was a memorable night, and Arnalf was by no means sorry when the vapours melted before the morning sun, and, on turning a sharp bend of the creek, he saw a whole fleet of canoes which the war chief in charge of his party said had been sent out to meet them and escort them up the river to the presence of the king.

The two flotillas approached each other, the canoemen uttering shrill cries and gesticulating wildly with arm and paddle, and the warriors, who were not paddling, occasionally firing their trade muskets and brandishing them in the air. But now that they came together their crews mutually ceased to paddle, and after much harmless and desultory chatter and exchange of congratulations, the united fleets, headed by the canoe carrying the principal war chief with Arnalf and his belongings, proceeded on their way. About a couple of miles further on they turned once again up a narrower stream and passed upon their right the island already described where the three girls had been crucified.

It had been a fine season; there had been abundance of rain with resultant good crops, and as no twins had been born in the past few months there were no human sacrifices about or wretched bodies lashed up in ghastly evidence on any of the withered trees. Nothing particularly disagreeable was to be noticed anywhere except that shortly before arriving at the town, which they reached about dusk, Arnalf got a whiff of a most disagreeable and peculiar odour, but little suspected its cause. The fact was, they were passing the mouth of the creek leading to the royal execution ground, which stream, though now fairly empty, was at times, in spite of the good offices of the crocodiles, fairly choked and piled high with headless, rotting corpses.*

As Arnalf and his party arrived late, it was against etiquette for him to see the king until the following day; but great preparations had been made to receive him.

A fine hut, as huts went in the town, had been prepared, and female and other slaves set apart to attend upon him. He was given water for washing, abundant food was placed before him, his wants were seen to generally, and he was taken care of most hospitably, if rudely, though it would hardly be accurate to say that the young missionary, whose ideas were as yet somewhat conventional, was not often shocked and pained by sights and gestures. The royal hospitality had even extended to the provision of temporary

* Appendix, Note 5.

wives, with whose presence, however, the scandalised European dispensed, managing to make himself understood by those interested in terms possibly more forcible than polite. Anyhow, ere it was very late matters had been comfortably arranged, and, having a good conscience, Arnalf slept the sleep of the just till awakened by his attendants to prepare for the momentous day before him.

The early part of the morning, according to etiquette, he had to pass indoors, and it was not till shortly before noon that he was summoned to his palaver and interview with the king.

That monarch was in a most amiable mood; the reports that he had heard from his chiefs were greatly in favour of the teacher who, said they, had prayed and so wrought that the expedition had come safely and happily once more to the feet of the king; and the white Juju man was withal so meek and inoffensive in spite of his supposed powers, that even the black priests and fetish men themselves, for a wonder, were not jealous of him.

Arnalf presented the monarch with his gifts from the Mission, which were graciously accepted, and, speaking to the best of his ability, explained that, hearing from his messengers that the king was in want of a teacher for his son, he had taken upon himself with all humility, at the request of the other white priests, to present himself as a candidate for the post. Without many words, the king then explained through an interpreter, for it was not etiquette for that monarch to speak directly to him, that he wished his son sent home to England to be well trained and made a man of, that he wished him taught all the knowledge of the whites, that in order that he should be fittingly maintained he had provided so much ivory and so much gold dust as a first installment, and that each year he would provide a further amount sufficient for his needs. He said also that as he wished the boy not to forget his native tongue he would send an old woman slave with him, whose duty it would be to speak to him every day and remind him of his father. Arnalf felt inclined to object to the extra burden of the old woman, but it was only a passing inclination, for the case was one for the exercise of due discretion, especially when the large amount of gold and ivory the king had mentioned was taken into account. Arnalf tried to see if the potentate in his present gracious humour would allow of a Mission being planted anywhere in or near his dominions; but on this point his majesty's mind was quite made up and very decided. He said he highly honoured the Mission by giving them his son to bring up and make a man of, that he believed in their integrity and that they would faithfully perform their part of the work, and take him, watch him, and bring him up carefully and return him safely to his loving father, and that he would duly pay them the amount stipulated, but that if they or any white men came uninvited within the limits of his territory they would be shot.* If the Mission ever wished to make a report to him, as he desired they regularly should do, they were always to send a messenger and advise him, but that he would have no white men coming there on their own account; the penalty would be very simple, he said, and he said it firmly.

With that the palaver ended, and Jowè was brought forward and introduced to his temporary guardian, told that he must obey him and obey those properly set over him by this first one, told also that he would have to accompany him to the coast on the following morning to go to England and be educated and made a man. With this the meeting broke up, the king sending a number of presents of various kinds to Arnalf's house, and giving orders to him and to the chiefs appointed to see them carried out for an early start on the following morning. Wherefore at break of day, Arnalf left as he had come, literally as well as metaphorically in the dark, wondering much at the inscrutable ways of the Lord, thinking little of the wiles of the devil, and accompanied by his ebony charge, young Jowè, and the latter's school fees.

It would have been enough to make the old trader turn in his freshly earthed grave could he have seen the way in which his precious advice was being carried out, and how his young protégé Jowè, instead of going to an engineer's, there to acquire all the mechanical and scientific knowledge of the whites, was on the high road to be made a man of at a missionary seminary. It was a curious case of the ungodly being

* See Appendix, Note 6.

turned to naught; the wicked man taken in his own devices, thought the worthy mission folk at the coast, and in their eyes, young Jowè appeared indeed a brand, or, rather, a bit of charcoal plucked from the burning.

While these were the thoughts and musings at the missionary station, where Jowè, owing to his curiosity and the novelty of things, was behaving in a most exemplary manner, very different were the scenes enacted at the chief town of the King of Gnongo. As Jowè had left them before his early maturity, no puberty feast could be held for him, and so to make up for this loss, the potentate consoled his warriors with an allegiance feast, whereat all swore fidelity to the absent son and heir of their king, and promised themselves a grand time when he came back, having been made a man.

It was a very superior entertainment which the king gave them, and the town was filled with drunkenness and debauchery after more blood than usual had been shed to the accompaniment of horns, tomtoms, and trade muskets.

A week or two later the king's town, the king himself, and all his subjects had settled down to their normal state, as likewise had the Mission on the coast, for Jowè had taken ship, or rather steamer, and started on his way to the land of the white men with Arnalf, who had been sent with him, and the old slave woman, Nanga.

CHAPTER III.

JOWÈ was only eleven years old when he left the land of his fathers, so soon to set out for England on the steamship *Nigeria*. He was not particularly happy on board, for he was very sick and he had to wear clothes: how he hated the white trousers which confined and chafed his lower extremities, hitherto, like the upper portion of his person, innocent of any clothing! The old slave woman, his nurse, Nanga, had to discard her string of beads and patch of matting for snowy petticoats, chemise, and turban. She, unlike Jowè, took kindly to the clothes of civilisation, very kindly, and wore her new garments as if she had served a lifelong apprenticeship to their use. Arnalf was sea-sick also, but he was very good to Jowè, and often, after dinner—for the little black fellow had his dinner by himself before the grown-up folk—he carried him nuts and raisins and dates and other delicacies from dessert, which dainties the boy devoured, wondering at the quality and variety of white man's fare. As for Nanga, she took most readily to white folk, and the white folk returned her confidence in them, and petted and humoured her in different manners from the fore-castle to the quarter-deck.

During the voyage Jowè was a general favourite with the passengers, for he was not a bad little fellow in his way, ready to laugh, friendly, curious and mischievous as a young monkey. He was down below amusing himself with some toys that a kindly quarter-master had made him, when he was called on deck to have his first sight of land.

He had picked up a few words of English, and seeing the white points of the Needles as the vessel headed for Southampton, he imitated a word he had heard someone let drop, and chirped out "Home, home!"

"Yes, my little chip of ebony," said a sailor near whom he was standing, and to whom he had addressed himself, "it's all very well for you to talk of home just now in the month of June; I wonder what you'll say in December!"

Poor Jowè! he was not afraid of snow, for of snow he had never heard; but of the Queen of England he was terribly afraid. He knew his father and his habits, and as he felt that the white Queen must be an immensely more powerful war chief, his forebodings as to her surpassing qualities took strange shape, fostered at times, and at times calmed down by the imaginative and talkative old slave, his nurse. His principal fear was that the Queen would send for him to kill him, and the warm weather and the hard glistening look of the cliffs made him fear a drought, and the chances of himself and his companion playing a prominent part among the consequent sacrifices. Even after he had been some time in England, a dry summer would make him quake, remembering the wretched girls he had seen crucified for the sake of bringing down the rain.

What a babel there was around him when he landed! what a strange multitude of sights and impressions went through his little brain and found sympathetic bewilderment in that of Nanga!

Their coming had been heralded, and Arnalf was met by friends, and, moreover, he was very happy, for had not this unexpected circumstance of the King of Gnongo's wish for a preceptor for his son been the cause of his getting home and probably seeing Gertrude?

"Look you how soon a service paid
Religion yields the servant fruit!"

So at least said Filippo Baldinucci, and I fear Arnalf had a faint, flickering feeling of satisfaction that he had offered himself as ready, on that eventful day at Westeria, to venture into the jaws of the lion.

Jowè was desperately frightened at the first sight of the train in the docks waiting to carry away the passengers—the engine gleaming and steaming, and the fierce red light rushing out of its mouth when the furnace door was flung open for a moment. “It is a dreadful beast, a Juju beast,” thought he.

“Look! little lord of the great one,” said his nurse, “they are feeding it upon black flesh!”

Jowè looked, and saw great lumps of what appeared to him black meat being thrust into the monster’s jaws. Both he and his nurse were too alarmed to say anything more, and followed their conductors meekly into the compartment reserved for them. But when the train started, their alarm grew into frantic terror, not greatly relieved when Arnalf explained that the locomotive was a pulling monster yoked to drag about the land canoes of the white men, such as was the train in which they were seated. Long Jowè remembered, as a sort of nightmare, his first visit to London—its noise and rush and thronging multitudes as he passed from one terminus to another in a four-wheeler with his friends inside and their belongings on top. In a mazed dream he entered the second train, and being very tired and over-excited, he soon fell asleep—a slumber which did not end until the party arrived at their destination, Beulah House.

It was a beautiful place, was Beulah House. “Brown’s Home for preparing Missionaries for Labour among the Heathen of Foreign Lands” it was officially called; but as the official title was rather too big a mouthful for ordinary folk, it usually went by the name of “Brown’s Mission Training Home,” shortened in the neighbourhood still further into “Brown’s.”

The house, which had originally been one of the seats of a nobleman, now in somewhat reduced circumstances owing to injudicious over-speculation connected with the rise and fall of racing odds, was a splendid specimen of the later Elizabethan style, and as the founder of the institution had spared no expense and trouble over his hobby, all the additions necessary for his purpose had been made with perfect taste, and under the very best architectural advice obtainable, with the result that the magnificent pile of buildings, to any but the most critical eye, bore no trace of increase, alteration, or mutilation.

Every facility for study had been foreseen and provided, and the eighty-six students in course of training had, to say the least, ample means at their disposal, did they so wish it, of acquiring a fine liberal education. In addition to the regular course of theology and apologetics and special languages, they were required to take up medicine; for all the students from Brown’s Home who finally decided to enter actively upon the field of missionary labour—and there were few, to their credit be it said, who did not—were required to take a medical degree. The splendid teaching they received, the proximity of the large manufacturing town with its well-furnished hospital, to which their own medical school was attached, and the ample opportunities they had themselves for both anatomical and physiological study in their private theatre and laboratory, were guarantees that none should fail without good reason, and hitherto none had failed when brought to the test in purely secular competition. There were always many more candidates for admission to Beulah House than vacancies; and hence the committee of management, guided by the able principal, could pick and choose their men.

The Rev. Robert Jarvis, D.D., really more of an educationalist than a divine, had amply justified the trust reposed in him, when fifteen years before the philanthropic founder had nominated him the first principal of his new Home, then young, untried, and indeed somewhat despised. Since that time a constant succession of medical missionaries had been sent forth from its fostering walls, and for the most part even the greatly prejudiced might allow that a stream of unselfish and far-reaching philanthropic devotion had been poured out from that midland county into many a dark corner of the earth.

Brown, the founder of this institution, was a type. His father had gone into business abroad towards the end of the last century, and was a comparatively rich man in the early part of the present one. On his retirement he was followed by his son, who duly walked in his footsteps, and, with his partners, greatly extended the already large enterprise, which thrived and prospered exceedingly. Certain of the commodities in which the firm traded, and traded largely, in fact, finding in them the most lucrative part of their

business, were not altogether conducive to virtue. Drugs and alcoholic liquors can hardly be looked upon as blessings when introduced for general indiscriminate and inordinate consumption; more especially when supplied of inferior quality, and at a price incompatible with purity.

Untroubled through his early life by these ethical questions, Brown at length retired, rich and honoured and full of years. In his retirement he began to think, and the thoughts brought him discomfort. His heirs had, however, no qualms, and pooh-poohed the strivings of his conscience; but there were others who saw in them the workings of heaven—for where our interest lies, there will our heaven lie also—and as the final result of these excursions, challenges, counter-challenges, and alarms, Brown's Home sprang into existence.

We are a queer folk, we mortals, and too materialistic are we to contemplate ourselves comfortably, wherefore we will say no more upon the matter so far as the spiritual side of this cross-entry in the books of Brown's conscience is concerned, beyond stating that, to keep up commercial metaphor, the said books in the eyes of most of his fellow-citizens showed a good and fully justified *per contra*.

Enough for them and for us that Brown's Training Home was built and endowed, and that it became a centre of light and usefulness beyond even, I expect, the imagination of Brown himself.

As we have said, it was a beautiful place where Jowè was destined to find his English home. The mansion lay a mile and a half distant from the neighbouring large manufacturing town, a town, by-the-by, not over-afflicted with smoky chimneys, for reasons connected with its staple manufacture and the large water power available. It stood practically in the country, yet with all the added attractions of a city within arm's length, so to speak. Some hundred yards in front passed the great high-road running south, and to the right-hand side of the entrance drive, looking up from the lodge gates, a beautiful lake lay like a sheet of silver reflecting the gables and twisted chimneys of the mansion. The grounds were laid out with considerable taste and carefully kept up, for the place, as Brown's heirs had learned to their disadvantage, was amply endowed. Behind stretched a moor, purple, green, and grey and distant blue, but between the house and the moorland was a lovely shallow valley, sheltering what, for its size, was one of the most beautiful woods in England, through the lower portion of which ran a little stream, rippling and tumbling over whin-stone and gravel to join the larger river some two miles off. A lovelier place in spring and in the late autumn than Beulah House, formerly known as Neffield Park, it were hard to imagine. Brown had no imagination, and when he changed the name of his acquisition as he did, it was the severest test he could have put upon it.

The Rev. Dr. Jarvis entertained Arnalf hospitably on his arrival, and as the advent of his young charge and the old slave woman had been expected, she and Jowè were taken care of by the worthy lodge-keeper and his wife. This couple had no children of their own, were well advanced in years, and having three spare rooms in their pretty little cottage, one of these was reserved for Jowè, another for Nanga, and the third formed a day nursery, so to speak, for the little black boy. Tired he was when he arrived, and soundly he slept the first night that he spent at Beulah House, and, to do him justice, he never forgot his primal waking to the beauties of an English landscape upon that lovely July morning.

The principal had been rather dubious as to the fitness of admitting the youthful Jowè to his establishment, but the earnest pleading of the secretary of the Society, to whom the Mission station of Westeria belonged, aided by the warm applications of the Rev. Mr. Sabine, the head of the Mission there, who was a personal friend of Dr. Jarvis, had overcome his scruples, and the arrangements at the lodge being practical and possible, Jowè, unconscious of all the fuss that his advent had caused, was admitted a member of the institution.

We have such a huge respect for our own royalties, and it is such an impossible thing for anyone to pass himself off in England as one of our own Royal Family, that we almost always give the most full and gullible credit to any creature, especially if the colour of his skin is somewhat dubious, who chooses to

masquerade here as a prince in his own country. We see frequent and amusing instances of it; so it has been and so it will be, and poor old Colonel Newcome's experiences will repeat themselves for many a day yet. Wherefore our Jowè, with, it must be said, far greater claim than many another, was dubbed and admitted prince, and came to be looked upon as giving quite an air of royalty and distinction to his temporary home.

Arnalf left him after a rest of a day or two, not without regrets, for Jowè was not at all a bad little soul; needless to say, he did not leave without much howling upon the part of the boy, which aroused the frantic and sympathetic grief of the old slave nurse.

Arnalf went up to London, for he had private business to transact of great importance to himself, and that was to find out Gertrude at the address she had given him; for he had designs upon the young lady, designs which he hoped she would meet at least half-way.

The King of Gnongo had given some handsome presents to the young man, which the Mission Society, after due consideration, had allowed him to keep: and in view of his courage in undertaking the expedition up country to the court of that somewhat dangerous monarch, to these gifts the committee had added certain substantial tokens of their own approval. These together were amply sufficient to allow of his becoming united to the object of his affections and paying for their passage out to Westeria. He had the fullest authority for this action from his superiors, as married missionaries are always more valuable, for many reasons, than unmarried ones, if their spouses are fitting helpmates. Successful in his quest, he found the girl quite willing to exchange the position of governess in a somewhat pursesey and conventional middle-class English family for that of wife of the man she was certainly fond of and a home of her own. West Africa presented no terrors to her mind, and after necessary notice given, she and Arnalf were quietly united, and sailed, happy in themselves and in their future, for the white houses and blistering sun of the delectable coast port whereby lay their present sphere of usefulness.

As Jowè and his old nurse met at first very few who could understand anything that they said, and as they on their part could understand as little of what was said to them, they were drawn very close together, and whatever the boy may have lost in comfort and advancement, he gained in memory and allegiance to the home of his fathers.

His arrival at the Training Home, however, had given a special impulse to the study of the Gnongo tongue, really a dialect of the more widely extended language spoken upon the coast, and, as Nanga faithfully followed the king's instructions and talked daily to the boy of his own country and of its glories—from a point of view, I fear, which would sometimes have shocked the good people about her, could they have followed her—Jowè was able to keep up his native tongue, which he even learned to write in Latin characters. As soon as he could do it, it was arranged that he should correspond with his father, but as almost the whole of his first literary studies were drawn from the Sacred Volume, his letters naturally bore a strong biblical character. As he had been led from his earliest years to regard certain not very distant tribes from a most unchristian standpoint, and as his old nurse kept him up to the mark with regard to these enemies of the Gnongo people, it so happened that at times the pages of the early historic books of the Old Testament afforded him useful and vivid suggestions of expressing, even in his own idiom, his feelings towards these objects of inherited dislike. Wherefore his earliest efforts at letter-writing generally required pruning.

The difficulty created by the inability of his father or any of his people to read or write was got over in this wise.

When a letter arrived at Westeria, a messenger was at once despatched to inform the King of Gnongo that news had come of his son, when one of the minor priests and a war chief would be sent to the Mission to hear the letter read. The priest, and there were always several of his kind attached to kings like Jowè's father, had a marvellous memory which served for all ordinary matters as his majesty's royal mail. When

the letter had been read slowly to him in the presence of the war chief he would repeat it almost verbatim. After a second reading, when any verbal slips that he had made would be corrected, he would repeat it again, and this time perfectly, when his majesty's letter-bag would be ready to start on his return journey. Arrived in his master's presence, he would be able to give him the entire substance of the missive quite accurately, if not absolutely word for word, and further in his person he had all the added advantages which, in more civilised lands, would have been given by a press copy-book, as he had only to be called up at any time to repeat any former letters that had been received and read to him.

Well did Jowè remember the first fall of snow he ever saw. One December morning he woke up to find the whole country white about him and a few large flakes still drifting slowly down. Hardly could he contain his excitement, and hardly could he be prevailed upon to finish dressing and eat his breakfast. He must get out and see it and feel it and play with the beautiful substance, especially as from his window he had seen the gardener's son and a tradesman's boy engaged in a slight skirmish with snowballs. Jowè tore out and into the thick of it, made snowballs galore, wallowed about, and challenged Nanga to come and join him. That good lady, however, was more cautious, and after one very dubious attempt to make a snowball retired within doors, and left Northern Nature's dreadful winter decoration severely alone, clucking, like a hen over a duckling, to her young charge to come into the house again. But little she was heeded, until shortly after came the reaction and the turn of the snow, which chilled poor Jowè's fingers till he thought they were on fire, and then made them ache till he cried aloud. He rushed indoors blubbering, and after drying them, he and his nurse most injudiciously endeavoured to warm his poor feet and hands at the fire, with the result that he got the most awful crop of chilblains that had ever appeared upon any dweller at Beulah House. A few days of judicious treatment, however, ridded him of most of them, but none the less, ever after that Jowè had a most healthy respect for snow, and displayed a marked dislike for the deceitful stuff. The freezing of the lake was also a cause of great astonishment, but warned by his previous experience with the snow, he left ice severely alone until he got to know more about it.

Jowè had unfortunately but few children of his own age to play with. It would have been better, perhaps, if it had been different, but the circumstances of his case prevented childish intercourse, and so, with one or two exceptions, he was brought up almost entirely amongst his elders and betters.

One experiment that was made to provide him with a companion ended most abortively. The principal, having heard of a small negro boy who had been sent home to some friends of his to be educated, thought it would be a good thing for him to spend some of his time with Jowè, and so wrote and arranged matters for the other little stranger to pass a few days at Beulah House, but the good gentleman had counted without Nanga and her charge.

Little "black Sam" was the son of a well-to-do native trader, who had an establishment in Sierra Leone, and who had sent his boy, the pride of his heart, home to a correspondent to be educated. He was a bright, intelligent young negro, and quite ready to make friends, but Jowè would have none of him; neither he nor Nanga. The old lady seemed to look upon his presentation to her charge as a great insult, and doubtless would have broken Sam's head for him with a rice-pounder had that proceeding been possible in her present surroundings. As it was, she turned up her nose at him, and taking Jowè by the hand, for, childlike, he was at the commencement willing to be friends, led him away, and would allow no communication between the children. Jowè, moreover, after being lectured by her upon the subject, was as obstinate as she, and regarded his little coloured brother from Freetown with more than contempt.

It was a funny incident, but if considered carefully it showed pretty clearly what strangers might expect up Jowè's river and in his dominions if he remained an unreformed and natural Jowè.

People in England are very apt to forget the tremendous distinctions that exist between different members and sections of the Hamitic race, and are apt to lump them all in one class; but I do not think that the difference between people and people, or individual and individual, in any of the European states

is half so marked or strongly differentiated as between one tribe of negroes and another, and between the different individual members of many of these tribes; differences in many cases emphasised and exaggerated by the twin institutions of polygamy and slavery.

The more advanced the tribe is in material civilisation the more strongly marked become the social distinctions, for the tendency of the negro is always towards a despotism, by whatever name it is called, and despotism favours and emphasises in its own interest all class distinctions.

A real negro democracy is an almost inconceivable thing. Hayti and San Domingo are fruitful proof of this, notwithstanding that the Marquis of Marmalade and his fellows have given place to colonels and judges and presidents and excellencies, for these bearers of republican insignia are no less despotic than were the late Lord of Marmalade and his like.

Jowè lost his old nurse, Nanga, about three years after their arrival in England. Poor old lady, her third winter proved too much for her, and she succumbed to an acute attack of pneumonia, lamented by all at the Mission Training Home. She had been a faithful, kindly creature, and when she had begun to pick up a few words of English, had made many friends. She had been early converted to Christianity, and, at her own earnest wish, she, like Jowè, had been baptised and made a member of the Church. Anyone who knows the negro character will know how little inconsistent this was with her frequent exhortations to her charge not to forget the land of his fathers and its customs and the old scores he was expected to pay off upon his neighbours. King David did the same thing before her; and so the faithful old woman was laid to rest, and Jowè forgot her injunctions, for the time being at least, in the winter pleasures of skating, cautious snowballing, and hockey on the ice.

Meanwhile he grew up like the boy Samuel, and increased in stature and knowledge and in favour apparently with gods and men. His superficially sympathetic nature made him quick to assimilate the ideas and the ideals that constituted the atmosphere of his surroundings. He was earnest with the earnest, tearful with the tearful, and more full of zeal than the most zealous, for the services of his Master, or masters, as the case might be. While still young he was a sure draw on any missionary platform, especially when after addressing the assembly in piping tones and fluent though somewhat broken English, he sat down, crying with excitement and grace, and was alluded to by the next ardent speaker as "this princely brand plucked from the burning by our dear fellow labourers in that vast heathen continent," etc., etc.

How the bones of that astute trader, the late lamented Mr. Smith, must have rubbed against each other in their far-off grave!

CHAPTER IV.

ALTHOUGH Jowè had been treated at first rather as a pet monkey than as one who was going to be a serious student, he was soon got to work, and his natural aptitude rapidly gave him a high place for his age, and gained him at least the respect of his older companions and masters.

He had taken to theology, or at least to certain branches of it, as a dabchick to water, and his tendencies were high, decidedly high from the beginning; in fact, as high or even higher than the extremest point to which Brown's Training Home cared to permit of his going, for it was a moderate establishment in the main, with somewhat Low Church leanings. In fact, when he was eighteen years of age, an age when most young Englishmen would have occupied themselves with more mundane interests and pursuits, Jowè was a pronounced sacerdotalist, or perhaps I should rather say, ritualist. Music, incense, holy water, and such things appealed to him most powerfully, and the long-drawn responses from a well-trained choir would send the strangest feelings quivering through his whole being. Somehow or other they called up in him thoughts and desires which he could not formulate, and to which he could give no definite shape, but which none the less seemed to surround him and hold him and almost choke him with their intensity and urge him on to something, but what that something was he could not understand or imagine.

He had made friends with the High Church rector of the neighbouring parish, and though the more simple and orthodox but less ornate principal of Beulah House did not regard this attachment and these tendencies on Jowè's part with any particular favour, for reasons which he hardly cared to explain, there was nothing to be said if the young man showed such an evident bent.

Dr. Jarvis, who was very far from being an ignoramus, even in provinces outside his own particular line of country, had read widely, and was somewhat of a student of Nature in her out-of-the-way corners, and this early and marked peculiarity on the part of his young charge gave him many an uncomfortable half-hour's cogitation. Moreover, his best friend, one of the neighbouring gentry, himself, like the late lamented Mr. Brown, a foreign merchant now retired, was upon similar lines at least a close observer, if not to be reckoned a really scientific student. He had had a large experience of the negro race, and fully appreciated their many good qualities, but was as fully aware of their defects. This gentleman was hardly the sort of person that the elders or representatives of the nearest dissenting body would call "a fervent and earnest Christian brother," or even the rector and churchwardens of his parish "a good churchman," looked at from their point of view; but none the less, I doubt whether either of these churches among them had collectively more of the real Christian virtues than were possessed by this fellow-mortal whom they were accustomed to regard with considerable suspicion, not unmixed with the discomfiting thought that somehow or other he was their superior.

Mr. Crookes, for that was his name, was, as I have said, an old friend of Dr. Jarvis, and in spite of the leisure of the one and the busy hours of the other, they managed to meet frequently. Often would the conversation turn to Jowè, and Mr. Crookes used to chaff his companion good-naturedly with regard to what he called "the Mission blackbird."

"You are teaching it to whistle, Jarvis," he said one day; "but you can hardly expect it always to whistle tunes of your own choosing. Why, I hear he is already giving up your simple notes for the more florid flourishes of my good old friend Rogers. He was not at your service at eleven yesterday, was he? No, I thought not. My daughters tell me that they saw him among the choir at early service at St. Asaph's in a white surplice, looking for all the world like the ace of clubs printed rather high up on the card. He was there at the second service, and also at eleven o'clock; it is quite touching. He simply blubbered at all the more emotional portions of the ceremony. You will have him joining the Salvation Army yet."

Thereat Dr. Jarvis smiled, knowing his friend's way, and his friend cracked a walnut, and continued—"All these niggers are like that—some more, some less. What are you going to do with the boy—send him back to Africa?"

Dr. Jarvis explained Jowè's position—how he was to go back and be of service to the tribe, and how he was shortly going to begin his medical course that he might become a useful, if not ornamental, member of his race.

"No fear!" the reprobate Crookes replied. "You will never make him a doctor; you won't get him through the lecture-rooms. Don't you know the tribe he belongs to? I wouldn't trust him with a subject; it wouldn't be safe—for the subject."

"Nonsense, Crookes, nonsense!" said Dr. Jarvis; but none the less he could not help feeling a slight discomfort, though he did his best to shake it off and try to forget the things he had read. "You are dreadfully prejudiced."

"Not at all, not at all," his tormentor answered cheerfully; "you just try it."

"I will," said the Doctor; and shortly after it was intimated to Jowè that it was high time his medical studies commenced.

To do Jowè justice, he was always ready enough to learn and to work hard to acquire knowledge; and so with a glad heart and willing mind he entered upon his labours. At first he got along well enough, but the lecture theatre was too much for him. Many before him have suffered in this respect, but in quite a different way. There was no feeling of nausea, no feeling of a sinking in the middle and faintness; no, with him it was very different. Horrible as he knew it was, and loathing himself for his thoughts, he could not resist a desire to play with the anatomical subjects or such portions of them as he could secrete. He felt, for instance, that it would do him good if he could get hold of an arm and bite it, felt he would like to carry an ear about with him all day in his waistcoat pocket, that he would like to roll himself over the poor remains, as my readers may often have observed a dog do over some unattractive mass of carrion. He could not analyse his feelings, he could not reason with them; they were as hopeless as they were appalling, but so strong were they that they completely put a stop to his further progress in that study where, necessary as it was, dissecting became for him an impossibility, for he could not enter the mortuary without a wild desire to handle and hack and gnaw at the inanimate objects before him, loathsome in themselves, but at the same time full for him of a ghastly but uncontrollable attraction.

It is only the simple truth to say that Jowè's reverend principal was much disturbed by this apparent impossibility on the part of one of his students to go through his medical course; and when discussing the matter with his friend later on, he was obliged to admit that there was something in his previous remarks.

"I told you," said Mr. Crookes, "what would happen if you tried to put him in a position for which he is not fitted. I will tell you what you should do with him; make him an evangelist, or rather a revivalist; make him go round and speak for your poorer missions; he will do that first rate, it will just be his line."

Mr. Crookes had been such a true prophet in the other instance that Dr. Jarvis was tempted to give his suggestion a trial; and Jowè, now rising nineteen, was sent forth to accompany two missionaries who were giving a series of lectures and holding meetings for the purpose of raising certain funds required by their particular mission, and to assist in pleading their cause, while learning what he could of missionary methods.

Again Mr. Crookes was right. Jowè succeeded beyond expectation: his intensely sympathetic if somewhat superficial nature enabled him to identify himself thoroughly with his new companions and with their cause. Towards the close of the first meeting, when, after they had spoken, it became Jowè's turn to address the assembly, he rose to the occasion. For the moment he fully believed himself one of the people of whom his friends had been speaking. Their sorrows, their sins, and their necessities became his own. With a rush of eloquence, simple and yet striking, Jowè wrestled and strove and fought with and

finally overcame his audience; with tears, with laughter, with groans, and with rejoicing he carried them along with him, and when he sat down, hysterical and almost beside himself, the collection that was taken up simply staggered his companions, and the enthusiasm that he evoked was as large as the cash sympathy which he enlisted. Such a report went of him from his grateful friends to the principal, that that worthy gentleman became fearful of his success, and wisely got Jowè back within the more sober influences of the Training Home before matters went very much further. But such a light could not be hid under a bushel; the fame of it flashed abroad, and a few weeks later, the Rev. Arthur Rogers even went so far as to beg, yes, actually to beg the principal of Brown's Training Home for Missionaries to allow Jowè to address, at the close of the bazaar got up to raise funds for the erection of a new reredos in St. Asaph's, a meeting specially convened to consider the financial aspect of the question. This seemed a harmless and unexciting subject, and so Dr. Jarvis could make no decent objection.

The bazaar was a great success. The élite and all the rest of the neighbourhood were present, and when at about half-past five and after tea the rector announced that Jowè, who had been most useful and conspicuous throughout the affair, would address a meeting in the large schoolroom—the sale had been held in a spacious marquee tent especially erected for the occasion—there were few who did not follow the Rev. Arthur to that room.

After a few words of introduction by the worthy cleric, and a few commonplace sentences upon the advisability of making the church beautiful, that gentleman prepared to make way for Jowè, whom, he said, he need hardly introduce to his audience. All knew the remarkable history of the Prince of Gngongo, and, like himself, he felt they were sure that a bright future awaited that portion of his native land that was to be under his sway. With these and a few other similar complimentary sentences, the good clergyman stepped down and Jowè stepped up.

The young orator began gently; at first he touched upon the necessity of beauty in religion, and from this he was led to speak of the beauty of religion itself, of the natural coldness of the human heart and the warmth that there should be in worship, and how this warmth was to be kindled chiefly, if not only, by the associations of external things. Once so far on his way, he warmed up, and from the reredos passed to the crucifix, from the crucifix to the crucifixion, and then was fairly started upon his career. There was no doubt about it, within certain limits he was a highly imaginative and really eloquent person; eloquent, that is to say, with the eloquence that appeals most forcibly to the uneducated or badly educated of our race.

I have no wish in the pages of a secular story to enlarge upon the sacred subject of Jowè's discourse, enough that he was uncommonly and almost too successfully graphic. His highly sympathetic audience, consisting, as it largely did, of women and children, was quite carried away by the speaker; so much so, that three passing Salvationists who, for some reason best known to themselves, had come into the meeting, were as enthusiastic as at any of their own revivals, and filled the air with halleluias, greatly to the scandal of the good rector, the more especially so as it was only with the extremest circumspection and the utmost difficulty that he himself could refrain from joining in the infectious syllables and keep within decent bounds the more ardent spirits of his flock.

At last the end of Jowè's speech came, the speaker urging his listeners to give, and to give liberally—and they did; many of them afterwards regretting their temporary insanity, while he himself, poor fellow, was ill for the week following the effort.

"No more of this," thought Dr. Jarvis, who, after the incident, had quite a heated interview with his friend Mr. Crookes, and accused him of sinister motives in his recommendation that Jowè should be made to take up the rôle of an evangelist and lecturer.

To avoid further scandals, Jowè was kept at more sober work and employed in teaching in a small local school which existed in connection with Brown's Home. Jowè, however, neglected no chance of

attending such services as were going on in the neighbourhood, and had at this time a very great desire to enter the Church.

He was now advancing in years, and would shortly be of age, and his father had more than once through the Mission at Westeria made inquiries as to when he was to see his son again. He had not, he said, asked for him home before, as he had heard in some vague way that in England they did not make a man of a boy until he was twenty-one years old, and so, if the white men wished to keep him the full time, they might do so. Jowè, to do him justice, or injustice, as the case might be, showed no great desire to return to the land of his fathers, and wished, at any rate, to remain in England until such time as he could be admitted and ordained a regular clergyman of the Church. Dr. Jarvis had his opinions upon the subject, and was determined that, so far as in him lay, Jowè should return to his people a layman; he had doubts as to the sort of clergyman he would make, doubts now shared in by the Rev. Arthur Rogers, and always strengthened and supported by the sceptical Crookes.

So finally it was arranged that Jowè, at least for the time being, should remain a lay helper, evangelist, and catechist, and return to the land of his birth, whence, after seeing what things were like, if he still continued in the same mind, he might come back to England and be ordained to the ministry. The matter being settled, letters were written to Westeria to say that Jowè, now grown to man's estate, would shortly be with them, and preparations were made for his departure.

Poor fellow! It was a sad day when he had to leave the place he had come to regard as his home; for, with his simple, kindly nature, he had made many real friends in the neighbourhood, and probably had not a single enemy among all who had ever met him. He was to go up to London for a week or two after leaving Brown's to get such outfit as was necessary, and remain the guest of the secretary of the Mission Society until his departure from the metropolis a week or two later. Though he had, as I have said, many sad adieux to make when leaving the Training Home, he was almost consoled by the novelty of things when he reached the capital. There he had much to occupy him in getting ready for his departure and in seeing the many people who were interested in him; and his fame, and not his failings, having gone abroad, the secretary and his council determined that he should have a metropolitan send-off.

He acquitted himself beyond expectation in the one or two addresses he had to deliver, and his last effort was at Exeter Hall, where his advent had been duly heralded with placards and announced in the religious Press. There, on one special, splendid evening, devoted to men only, Jowè, primed from missionary reports, for his own personal knowledge of such things was too infantile for him to draw upon, described the horrors of pagan polygamy, enlarged upon the lusts of the natives, and warned his audience, consisting chiefly of City clerks, from sins of which, but for this interesting information gratuitously afforded them, they would never have had any knowledge.

And so poor Jowè left our England, liked and regretted by many and with certainly not an enemy in the world; a curious character and a type of many of his race—a race with which one can do anything if its units are only treated as the members of a large family to which a kindly government stands *in loco parentis*, but a race which is utterly incapable of governing itself, and to whose needs missions run upon the usual lines are, as a whole, inadequate. For it is hopeless merely to plaster and whitewash with the results of our civilisation, centuries old, and our modes of thought as old as the race, another and, mentally speaking, younger race which has not attained to anything like our intellectual and practical plane.

We, standing on the docks, will leave him, where, with streaming eyes and a soppy handkerchief, he waves us adieu from the quarter-deck of the West African steamship *Benin*, outward bound and carrying a considerable cargo and full list of passengers.

CHAPTER V.

JOWÈ leant over the taffrail of the steamer with only his sad thoughts for company; his streaming eyes were fixed upon a group of friends rapidly growing smaller in the increasing distance as the vessel threaded her course down Southampton Water and out to sea past the gleaming Needles.

A gentle swell was breaking at their feet, and further off the Channel lifted a large and somewhat listless bosom to the sky. It had been blowing a bit, but now both wind and sea were tired out and only a long and steady swell was left to recall to the bright to-day a memory of yesterday's squalls and struggles.

Gentle, however, as was the motion that it imparted to the steamship, this was too much for Jowè in his present somewhat over-wrought condition. He had eaten freely in the morning, urged thereto by kindly meaning but injudicious friends, and had partaken of more of the simple liquids that appeared upon the breakfast table than was good for him. Naturally he felt very ill, so for the present we will e'en lead him below and leave him for a while in that misery which spares neither sex nor age nor clan nor colour, the one common inheritance of the human race—misery that claims much, yet, I fear, receives but little sympathy, and from whose wretchedness laughter often is not far removed when we would have tears.

I have said that the steamer had a full list of passengers bound for Westeria. The Governor of the colony, General Sir Thomas Tumbling, K.C.M.G., and his lady were on board, with their three children and the latter's governess, a Miss Maynard, and their nurse. Two of the children were boys, young pickles, seven and six respectively, and the youngest a little girl of two. Among the passengers more immediately connected with the Governor's party were His Excellency's private secretary, Mr. Warriston, a clever, well-informed young man, and his aide-de-camp, Captain Fellows, together with one or two other officials returning in the same steamer to the Coast.

Foremost among the non-official passengers was Jowè himself—but stay! Jowè was on his way back to assume a very official position indeed, that of heir-apparent to the throne, or, more correctly, footstool, of the King of Gnongo. Excepting him, then, whom we must certainly count as official, perhaps the principal passenger not holding office on the Coast was a Mr. Frederick Hinton, manager of and part partner in the largest trading firm in Westeria. This gentleman and two other mercantile men—a Mr. Jeffries and a Mr. Nothmann—and a couple of engineers, one a Mr. Braye sent out to take charge of some newly discovered gold mines, and the other a Mr. Carolus going to report upon a timber and mineral concession, constituted the more prominent of the unofficial travellers. There were also some half-dozen young clerks and employees, and several individuals slightly touched with colour, but no blacks, save Jowè.

The voyage commenced as many a thousand other voyages have done, and will do, so long as steamers cross the seas and carry passengers. The first part of the *Benin's* run down Channel was comfortable enough for her crew and the experienced, but as she drew towards Ushant a breeze from the north-west freshened up a bit and drove the big Atlantic rollers in towards the coast of France. Further on in the Bay of Biscay a grey sky, occasional squalls, and a heavy beam sea combined to make her decks sloppy and uncomfortable—a cheerless sight for those who ventured up the gangway, while those less stout of heart, who kept to their cabins, had a miserable beginning to their journey.

Not till they got past Lisbon did things brighten up. Then the wind went down, veered a bit, and finally died away altogether. Presently out came the sun, smiling first with a gentle, deprecatory little smile that gradually spread across the deep, until, taking courage, it burst into a broad, hearty grin over a sky and sea of quivering azure.

An hour or so after breakfast the decks began to look lively—deck-chairs appeared as if by magic, the quartermasters were busy and kindly, combining as they did in themselves the qualities of the sturdy

man-at-arms and the good old family nurse; and before luncheon the ladies, with few exceptions, had quite regained their spirits, their colour, and their appetite after the uncomfortable seclusion of the past day or two.

None of the passengers recovered more speedily than Jowè. With the help of a steward his large portmanteau was dragged from under a vacant berth opposite the one in which he had lain; for Jowè had a cabin to himself, possibly through deference on the part of the purser to his royal blood, or it may have been for other reasons; and opening his store of raiment, he drew forth garments suitable to his first appearance in this new sphere. A pink shirt, a pale, though vividly green tie of a colour which, had he been "Barbadian born," he would have known as "Yam prout," a suit of spotless white flannel, and a white straw hat with a yellow crown woven on the face of its blue ribbon completed his get-up. Poor Jowè, like nearly all his race, regarded colours only with an eye to contrast, and, true to himself and to his origin, thus attired he safely reached the deck at 11:30, and, needless to say, created a sensation.

Half-way up from the saloon he had encountered Mr. Warriston, who had greeted him in a friendly way, regarding him, man and plumage, as some out-of-the-way bird whose existence was fully justified by the mere fact of its existing. Jowè, on his part, had returned the greeting in such an easy, affable manner, and had made a quotation from Byron of such apt application to his late woes and to the past discomfort of the voyage in general, followed up by a witty saying of Sheridan's, that the young secretary, himself a very widely read and able person, had been "struck all of a heap," and found himself mounting the last steps and passing out from the deck-house on the deck in as easy a companionship with Jowè as though they had been on the most friendly terms for the last twelve months. Jowè, it was true, had from the first been an object of interest to the whole ship's company, and his history was more or less known, but Mr. Warriston had not been prepared for such a phenomenon.

They stepped out of the door upon the lee-side and, as it happened, close to the chair of Lady Tumbling, fat and fair, if somewhat under forty, whom the shaking of the last day or two had not affected in the least, for she was not of the unfortunates who were troubled with *mal de mer*. Having found the decks pretty dull hitherto, she wanted to be amused, or rather, to find someone who would take the trouble to amuse her and also her irresponsible imps without making too great a demand upon her brains. Miss Maynard, the governess, was not very well and was still below, and the nurse's time being fully occupied with the little girl, her ladyship had found the boys, who were exceedingly fit and lively, somewhat of a handful.

"Oh, Mr. Warriston!" she cried, as he appeared, "what a long time you have been below! I am just plagued to death keeping Jack and Freddy in order."

Jack, unobserved by his mamma, was at that moment busy unravelling her ladyship's knitting, while Freddy looked demurely on.

Mr. Warriston had an inspiration; he felt instinctively that Jowè was fully qualified to amuse half a dozen ladies and at least a score of boys, and he rose to the occasion.

"Lady Tumbling," he said, "I am sure you must have heard of Mr. Jowè, who has just been telling me the most wonderful things. I am sure you would like to hear them."

At this her ladyship, curious as all her sex, desired to hear the wonderful things, while Jack stopped ravelling out the unfortunate piece of work, and, with his younger brother, appeared equally ready and anxious for marvels.

With that easy and courteous but not too great familiarity which is only found among people of perfect breeding, Jowè took a low, vacant chair beside the Governor's spouse, and doing justice to the introduction, proceeded to deal in wonderful things. Enough that he succeeded, and in ten minutes Lady Tumbling's own feeling towards him was a regret that he was not white, mixed with satisfaction that the tedium of the journey would be relieved by occasional conversations with such a very amusing and

interesting individual. As for Jack and Freddy, they were charmed with their black friend. In his hands a handkerchief became a rabbit, which in turn was transformed into a rat, and ended by becoming a snake that finally swallowed itself, commencing at its own tail.

"How is that done?" said Fred, the inquisitive.

"I'll pull it open!" cried Jack, the mischievous.

But he did not, for the handkerchief vanished as if by magic, apparently down the magician's throat.

A sheet of paper was next requisitioned by the enchanter, and the boys were soon absorbed in the manufacture of a marvellous box, which in turn became an armchair, and then dissolved into a step-ladder.

"Mr. Jowè, you are perfectly charming," said her ladyship; while the boys, seated one on each of Jowè's knees, with their little arms round his neck and their white cheeks pressed against his ebony ones, begged for one more sight of box, rabbit, or step-ladder.

But Jowè was a diplomatist *by nature*, as in fact he was everything else, wherein lay the key of his curious character, and for the present he was obdurate to entreaty.

Poor chap! He was a creature of instinct and impulse, not of reason, and if the world in the end went hard with him it was more the world's fault and the fault of fate than his own!

His career now, however, was one of triumph. His Excellency's lady had taken him up and pronounced him a paragon; others followed suit and agreed, and under present circumstances they were not far out. Jowè was friendly, too, with the gentlemen, for he was quite free from the common negro failing of insolence in success, and had not only been well educated, but well trained; moreover, he had a considerable amount of humility and natural gentleness in his nature, the result being that he was very soon on amiable terms with most of the men on board, except always the gentlemen of partial colour. It was a curious fact, but Jowè would not take to them nor they to him. Anyone who had a mixture of black and white blood was abhorrent to him; why, he could not tell; he seemed to feel as if he would like to kill them, and the aversion was mutual. Some savage tribes actually devour any crossbred children born among them; the feeling may be instinctive.

There was no doubt about it that the governess, Miss Maynard, was pretty; very pretty, I should perhaps say. She was rather tall, with a good figure, and a delicate though bright complexion, while her large dark blue eyes, seen through their long lashes, and her fair, wavy hair made her just the sort of girl to be a centre of attraction during a voyage, especially as she shone by contrast with a number of lady passengers, for the most part no longer young, and undowered with any large portion of the gift of beauty.

Jowè had come suddenly upon her after lunch on that first fatal day when he made the acquaintance of Lady Tumbling, and had been greatly impressed. Strange as it may appear, or not strange as some may think, Jowè had never yet had the least touch of the tender passion; even the swine fever of mere amativeness had left him severely alone. Why this was so I am not in a position to say; I can but record the fact. Possibly hard mental exercise and the fact that his leisure thoughts had been directed strongly to other things had overwhelmed and contracted the deeper natural feelings. However that may be, the two little boys wondered at Jowè's silence and confusion for the first few minutes after they had pounced upon him and dragged him up to be introduced to their governess.

"This," said Jack, "is Miss Maynard, our governess. We call her May, but her name is Maynard. Mother says we are rude, but we are not, are we, May?"

Here Miss Maynard rebuked them, apologising sweetly for their rudeness; and Jowè's tongue coming back to him presently, he made himself as agreeable as usual.

Miss Maynard was going out more as a companion to Lady Tumbling than as a governess, though the latter was the apparent relationship in which she stood to the family. Her mother had been an old friend of the Governor's wife, and when she died and the girl's father, the vicar of a small and poor parish near Torquay, got foolishly involved in some mining adventure—the favourite folly of the cleric and the

unprotected widow—her ladyship suggested that, temporarily at least, Miss Maynard should go out with her and her husband. To take away the feeling that this was done merely as a favour and out of charity the kind lady had arranged that she should accompany her nominally as instructress to her little boys. Thanks to that strange freemasonry which exists among travellers, and the very comprehensive intelligence department that is speedily organised among passengers on mail boats bound for distant ports, most of these facts shortly became public property, and in consequence Miss Maynard received more deference and respectful attention than would have been likely had she been merely what she seemed—governess to the Tumbling pickles. I have said she was very pretty. For the rest she was a nice, kindly, unaffected English girl, but young and full of animal spirits and somewhat inexperienced.

Jowè was no fool, and when he chose could talk wisely and earnestly as well as amusingly. Moreover, he alone could keep the pickles in order, and this latter, more than his conversational powers, was the cause of their being thrown very much together. Too inexperienced to see danger or even loss of caste in this familiar intercourse, and without that feeling of the differences—mental, physical, physiological, and psychological, lying between the whole Aryan or Indo-Germanic races and the black Hamitic, which comes of greater knowledge—the girl permitted a freedom that had the gravest consequences. Perfectly innocent in thought and deed, never dreaming of harm, she was decidedly imprudent, and should have permitted no intercourse without the saving presence of others.

Here permit me to digress and utter a note of warning. In my travels I have come across many instances of union between the white and the black, but none even moderately satisfactory. In particular, I recall to mind a waitress at one of the restaurants at a popular exhibition held in London a few years ago. This girl, pretty above the average, and with ample potentialities of matrimony among her own kind, reciprocated the somewhat clumsy attentions of a huge West Indian negro, engaged in an official capacity at the same place, and finally married him, to the great disgrace of her people and blood. Nett result, a large family of half-breeds, who have, as usual, inherited in aggravated form the vices of both parents and the virtues of neither of them. The mixed race is bad enough even when the mixture is of similar stock, such as takes place in our Indian Empire, where the Eurasian question is a daily growing difficulty; but when it is a question of intermixture with the negro, the imagination boggles at it. Portugal, at least, has lost her empire through it; let us keep ours!

In truth, Miss Maynard gave Jowè no more encouragement than she gave anyone else; but she must have seen that he admired her, and she should at once, in a few kind words or by that chilly manner a woman can so easily assume, have given him to understand that though in many other respects her equal, on that one point he, as a matter of fundamentals, was—impossible. This, whether from innocence or a desire not to hurt the poor fellow's feelings, she omitted to do.

The *Benin* having now passed her first port of call, the passengers began to prepare for the inevitable concert. A concert and entertainment having for its object the raising of funds for the widows and orphans of our merchant seamen is as much part of the routine on nine-tenths of the voyages made by passenger steamers and mail boats throughout the world as are indeed the regular meals and games of "bull," "shuffle-board," and "deck-quoits."

Mr. Hinton, the leading merchant of Westeria, took the chief part in getting the affair up; and when it came off was greatly assisted by the purser, a banjoist and a bit of a comic in his way, and by Captain Fellows, who sang sentimental ballads of the "Old Madrid" and "Pretty Jane" order. Mr. Carolus, the engineer, contributed a quiet but very funny little speech after the manner of the American humorist, and Mr. Braye, who had a great admiration for poetry of a stirring order, recited some patriotic verses. Mr. Nothmann, from Hamburg, developed unexpected qualities as a tenor, and several of the ladies sang exceedingly well. Miss Maynard had a sweet though not very strong voice and warbled one or two songlets very prettily. In fact, the concert was quite a success. But the highest point was reached when,

after the singing and the recitations were over, and before the contributions were taken up, Jowè was put forward to give an address on behalf of the collection about to be made for the Widows' and Orphans' Fund.

It was a congenial subject, and Jowè acquitted himself manfully.

"Good gracious!" said His Excellency to his friend and secretary, Mr. Warriston, after the first few sentences, "the fellow is an orator, a born orator, a perfect genius in his line, upon my word!"

The Governor's dictum was perfectly correct upon the point in question, for, in his way, Jowè was undoubtedly a bit of a genius, and on that night he shone. When he had finished, there was not a soul present who did not feel that if he or she were not a seaman's orphan, he or she ought to have been one, or was likely to be one, and felt that in contributing to the charity for which Jowè pleaded he or she was contributing to his or her individual benefit, as the case might be. Poor Jowè had to retire, overcome by his emotions, into the wings; and the stewards, almost sobbing with sympathy, gathered in such a collection for the widowed wives and destitute children of seamen lost in the merchant service as had never before been achieved upon the *Benin* or upon any of her sister liners. There was no humbug about the orator, who had really felt deeply for the time being for the cause which he was advocating and who made others feel with him; wherefore, next day, there was not a single scoffer at his eloquence, though more than one regretted its passing but effectual potency.

Jowè was by no means Miss Maynard's only admirer, and when her charges were safe down below and asleep and she came on deck from the saloon after dinner she had little lack of male company. Good Lady Tumbling mothered her most judiciously and kindly—gave her plenty of rope, it is true, but kept tight hold of the end of it; in fact, appeared as much in the character of a model chaperon as in that of an indulgent mistress. Mr. Hinton, probably the most eligible young man on board, was quite as badly stricken as Jowè, and two others also showed outward and visible signs of the epidemic. Poor Jowè! it was a bad thing for him that he was allowed even to appear to take part in the running.

In Mr. Carolus the young lady had a great admirer and stand-by, for with him Miss Maynard—simple girl—felt herself safer than with the rest, for had he not a Mrs. Carolus at home? No one could doubt that this was her first voyage.

It was a moonlight evening—one of those evenings that in the tropics appear to glide unchanged into the small hours of the night. The throb of the engines and the answering pulsation of the steamer, blending with the low, soft sound of the waves sliding past her great hull and meeting astern, seemed to soothe the senses into that dreamy condition in which all things become tinged with a poetic halo, giving birth to dreams of infinite possibilities, against which the more stern, practical necessities of this life, arrested for a moment, cease to strike.

Miss Maynard was looking over the bulwarks and across the shining waters, liquid silver around her and below her, light of soft silver rising into an arch above. In the semi-darkness Jowè himself looked not so dark as he stood beside her, speaking in tones that told of his agitation, until finally, overcome by passion, he uttered words that no white lady should listen to from one of his colour and race.

Then she saw the mischief she had at least permitted to take root. Turning away at once—but more in pity than in anger—she found herself face to face with Mr. Hinton and Mr. Carolus, the former somewhat hot and out of temper, the latter ready with a bad joke comically uttered. This broke the spell, and, with the exception of Jowè, set them all a-laughing and apparently at their ease.

"Tea is ready in the saloon," said Mr. Hinton in rather a strained tone; "won't you come down and have some, Miss Maynard?"

Miss Maynard went gladly, for self-reproach was upon her; and Jowè followed them, angry, and, for the time being at any rate, hating Hinton with a bitter hatred—hitherto a stranger in his heart—though he could hardly have told why.

So the voyage went on, but, as the longest voyage—and this was not a particularly long one—must have an end, the end came shortly; and one dazzling morning, with the perspiration rising in little globes of tar from the caulking of her deck planks, the *Benin* found herself off the port of landing she had so frequently made before, and which, as duty called her, she was so often to make again.

And now the passengers leaning over the saloon deck rails saw the blue water change to brown and the brown rush by in ever-deepening and increasing volume as the great steamer rolled towards the surf-swept sands which guarded the entrance to the river mouth, beyond which, sparkling to the sun, lay the white city of Westeria. Close ahead, however, there was but little to be seen save a fringe of snowy surf, and over the smooth water—itsself invisible as yet—the top of a line of towering palms, with here and there the crest of a lofty cotton-wood between. Presently the telegraph clanged twice; the steamer trembled to the rapid vibration of her engines, and went over the bar with every pound of steam that they could carry. Three or four times she swung wildly aloft among the breakers that flung themselves in cascades across her forecastle, and sent the spray and scud and white foam boiling over her bulwarks. Once—twice—her keel almost touched the treacherous sand below, but she lifted past it safely, and then rolled out into the smooth water inside, having “jumped the bar”—an undertaking which is not always satisfactorily accomplished, as underwriters know to their cost. The yellow waters of the wide river flashed back a dazzling, gleaming light, and the air danced and shimmered over its glancing surface until eyes were glad to turn towards the green line of palms and patches of forest and scrub that now showed up on either bank.

Another twenty minutes or so and the *Benin* had drawn up abreast of Westeria, comparatively close in shore and in towards the jetties, along which, however, there was not sufficient depth of water for vessels of her size to lie. “Let go!” came from the bridge; “Let go!” echoed its way along the forecastle in answer to the hoarse response of the boat-swain and his mates, and the anchor leapt from the bows with a crash and sought a temporary resting-place in the soft slime that formed the bottom of the river.

Hardly was the vessel at rest before it was surrounded by swarms of jabbering, gesticulating negroes in craft of every description. Compliments and the reverse flew about and filled the air; down went the gangway, the agent came on board, the formalities of communication were gone through, and in a very short time those passengers of the *Benin* who were leaving her at Westeria, her principal port of call, had abandoned her decks for *terra firma*; and ere the twelve o’clock gun rang out from the bastions of the old Portuguese fort, and the Houssa bugles had blown midday, the disembarkation was complete, and the family of fellow-passengers had dispersed, never again to be united.

CHAPTER VI.

IT was the fifth day after Jowè's arrival in Westeria, and the warriors of the King of Gnongo were preparing to receive him.

The morning had dawned with the great Obi drum booming ominously from the Juju house and sending its sullen notes reverberating through the surrounding forest, a summons that none dared ignore.

Three days had passed since the King of Gnongo had received letters and news of his son, and had learned that ere long the hope of his country would return to him. Fitting preparation must therefore, the monarch had decided, be made for his reception. As nothing of importance in the way of ceremonial could be carried out without a large number of slaves for sacrifice, the king had given orders for a great slave-hunting expedition up the river, and the invasion of the territories of certain tribes with whom he had long been at peace, and who would therefore be more likely, in their fancied security, to furnish a fruitful field for conquest and ravage.

The whole of the three days had been devoted to the necessary preparations. Rum, provisions, and powder had been stored in the great war canoes, fresh flints had been inserted in the locks of the muskets, cutlasses and knives had been sharpened. Preliminary human sacrifices had been performed, and most propitious omens drawn therefrom; and now all was ready for the start.

It was to be a great raid, and one fitting to the occasion, for the nation, if such it can be called, was full of loyalty and upon the tiptoe of expectation for the home-coming of their prince. The people had waxed strong and prosperous during his absence, the king's war chiefs had extended their conquests widely, and consequently the amount of tribute in gold and ivory and palm oil and other kind paid to the monarch had largely increased. Now, in honour of the great event to which they had so long looked forward, the warriors were about to set out upon a more distant and important expedition, at least in point of daring, than any hitherto attempted.

Meanwhile the Obi drum boomed at intervals, and its dull sound, rolling across the open spaces and among the huts, set almost the entire population of the town moving towards the river to witness the departure of the warriors. First went a few scores of the humbler women-folk, carrying necessities and luxuries that had been overlooked; behind them groups of paddlers, mingled with attendants of the chiefs and some of the lesser fighting men; these were followed by the bulk of the warriors, with their principal captains striding along at their head, the under chiefs marching in the centre of the mass or bringing up the rear. Flanking and following the whole body surged a shouting, perspiring, glistening, malodorous mass of black humanity, chiefly women and children, who shrieked and laughed and danced and deported themselves generally as no other known race of men or animals would.

But shortly a kind of order was formed in this apparent chaos; one or two commands shouted by the principal chief and repeated by the lesser officers brought first the warriors and then the mob to their senses. Farewells were hastily said, and the navigating and fighting crews embarked; a few last compliments were bandied to and fro, last packages of delicacies were flung into the vessels, then, after a grim joke or two bearing on the return of the party, at a given word the canoes were pushed from the bank, the paddles were dipped simultaneously into the dark, oily water, and the whole flotilla glided away from the shore upon its course down stream.

Past the execution ground, with its sickening odour—at present, however, not very strong—went the canoes, thence on past the creek that led up to the place of crucifixion, and on, on through the mangrove-bound channel, till they shot out into the main water-way. There the prows were turned sharply to the right, and the flotilla proceeded on its course up the great river.

With but few rests the crews paddled all day long, and towards evening made for a beach devoid of mangroves, or rather, to speak more correctly, a hummock of firmer land that rose some ten or fifteen feet above the surrounding sea of vegetation and quaking waste of mud. Here they lighted fires, cooked their food, and rested for the night.

From their present position, the town belonging to the tribe they were on their way to attack lay about three days' journey up the stream. The character of the land changed considerably at that threatened spot, and the change extended over the territory lying along the river bank for a distance of several miles further still, for there a tongue of higher land, pushing out from the uplands of the interior, thrust its way through the wide-stretching mangrove belt until its extreme borders were washed by the great river itself. The inhabitants of the doomed town, which stood a short distance from the stream, were an offshoot from one of the inland tribes which, having suffered greatly from Arab raids in their own country, had moved away, bag and baggage, to the south and west. They were different in many respects from the true coast negroes, kept herds of cattle, and owned few, if any, firearms; but they were skilled workers in iron and other metals, with such poor tools as they possessed. They cultivated the soil in a rude manner, and, though not a very brave folk, were, so far as they went, a decent and, for that part of the world, highly respectable people.

Their town, as has been said, stood but a little way back from the open shore in a clearing made in the bush. It was surrounded by a rough palisade, and consisted of rows and streets of combustible grass-thatched houses. It had but two gateways, one leading east inland, and the other west down to the stream. All round it there was a bared space of some acres, and in different directions through the forest lay little clearings and gardens. The road leading east-wards into the bush extended to no great distance, and was soon split into small paths which, for the most part, finally lost themselves in the denser jungle beyond. That leading to the west, on the contrary, was wide and open, and after passing through a fringe of scrub that hid the town from the river, ran out upon a broad, bare opening, which sloped down to the water's edge without any shrubbery or other obstruction.

About a day's journey to the southward of this town was a small village inhabited by a kindred and somewhat similar, if not identical, race of people, whose own settlement was situated in like manner upon the same comparatively narrow slip of land which ran down from the back country through the mass of mangroves, and thrust a clean foreshore into the turbid stream.

Two days' journey below the spot last mentioned, the expedition, whose course we are now following, was at the moment encamped. It would have been easy to surprise, and would have fallen a ready prey had a sufficient force been there to surprise it; for the negro race, unless worried into prudence by constant danger, is a most unsuspecting one, and incautious to the verge of idiocy in its disregard of eventualities. Safe, however, in their resting-place—for on that stretch of water there was but little danger of an attack—the confident sleepers awoke upon the following morning and continued their course up stream.

The plan of their campaign was to paddle boldly up to the first village, lying about a day's journey from their objective, land there, and treat the inhabitants of the little place in an amicable way. They were already on a somewhat friendly footing with them, and though up to that time no expedition so large had passed their shore, the raiders felt more or less certain that their victims' suspicions would not be aroused, and that no warning of their approach would be sent on to the larger town. To make things sure, however, they arranged to despatch a couple of canoes ahead to occupy two deep, narrow creeks that ran up inland between the two settlements, and were crossed by the only path that led directly from the village to the town. The plan was diabolical in its cunning, yet very simple, for the leading canoe would merely have to watch unseen the first ford, allowing anyone to cross it, but allowing none to return; while the second canoe on the other side of the island, or rather delta, which here was only a few hundred yards wide,

would be placed so as to capture all attempting to cross to the further shore. The place thus watched and guarded would become a certain death-trap to whoever crossed the first stream. Meanwhile the main flotilla would leave the little village with every appearance and assurance of friendship, and sweep up as rapidly as circumstances would allow to the attack of their certain prey, the town.

All day long our warriors paddled as before, and at evening rested upon a sand-spit that ran out from an island in mid stream; thence pushing on upon the following day, they reached the first little village by nightfall. Before drawing in to land, however, and when it was too dusk for things to be clearly distinguished, they sent ahead the couple of war canoes intended to occupy beforehand the fords and passages between their present resting-place and the point of attack.

The main body landed at the little village so suddenly and in such overwhelming numbers that there was no chance for the villagers to do otherwise than at least appear to believe in the friendship thus unexpectedly thrust upon them, and give at least apparent credence to the statements of their numerous and not altogether welcome guests.

These guests, however, considering what they were, behaved in a most unexceptionable manner. Gifts of rum and other things were pressed upon their hosts, and it was declared that all that was required was space in which to rest and water and fuel for cooking. Furthermore, as they did not attempt to place any restraint upon the movements of the villagers, these latter were inclined to think that no harm could be intended either against themselves or their friends higher up the river. However, to make things quite safe, half a dozen young men were despatched late at night to give their unsuspecting neighbours warning, and apprise them of the coming of the King of Gnongo's war canoes.

That monarch's black brigade had announced to their entertainers that they were on their way to attack some of their master's ancient enemies much higher up the river, and even mentioned the name of a tribe whose territories lay some six or eight days' paddling further on; but though this was specious enough upon the face of it, a careful estimate taken on the sly of the amount of provisions the warriors had brought with them, went far to rouse to life the suspicions that had only been partly lulled by the apparent artlessness and affability of their guests. No, it was argued, if they were going all that way they would have brought more food. Hence the despatch of the messengers. Meanwhile, all went well with the Gnongos and with those they were honouring with their presence, and when the morning came the warriors seemed in no hurry to be off, but took things leisurely, and complained much of the long journey in front of them and of the severe and harsh orders of the king which compelled them to undertake such a disagreeable enterprise. However, at last they were all on board, and with interchange of compliments and firing of muskets and blowing of horns they parted with every appearance of good will; the one side content in having, for the present, at least, got out of the clutches of the dreaded warriors of the King of Gnongo unscathed, and of having at the same time given their neighbours warning; the other confident that they had outwitted their entertainers and taken such measures as would enable them to fall upon their prey unawares.

The sun was still high in the heavens when the crew of the leading canoe rested on their paddles, an example followed by the others as they successively came up, for it was hereabouts that the entry to the creeks commenced. I say creeks advisedly, though in reality there was but a single creek with two mouths forming a species of delta, but as the apex of this delta, where the arms joined, was some five or six miles from their debouchement into the river, each of the two outlets was practically a creek.

Paddling slowly along the edge of the mangrove wilderness they presently came upon the entrance to the first of these outlets. Here for the moment they stationed a couple of canoes, while the remainder of the flotilla proceeded upon its way till a few hundred yards further on they reached the mouth of the second creek, up which they turned. Here for the present most of the vessels rested, one or two only

continuing up the channel, where, after paddling a mile or so further, they came upon one of the canoes sent in advance to secure the passage.

On the spit or delta between the two streams dwelt an old man and his family. Their duty was to paddle the villagers across these two arms or creeks, and the Gnongos being aware of this arrangement, the warriors in the first canoe, as ordered, had merely kept in hiding and watched the first point of crossing. When the young men who had been sent from the village to carry news of the approach of the war party to the town arrived at the water's edge and hailed the ferryman, the old fellow answered their call, and coming over to them in his little dug-out, ferried them across. Then, making his vessel fast to the bank, he accompanied them across the land to ferry them over the other creek in a second craft kept for the purpose at another landing-place. No sooner, however, did he and his companions approach it than they were greeted with half a dozen musket shots fired at point blank range by the warriors lying in wait hard by in their canoe. The first discharge fatally wounded four of the young men; the remaining two, however, with the ferryman, dashed back up the path down which they had just come, hotly pursued by the bloodthirsty warriors. At the sound of musketry the party watching the passage on the other creek shot up in their war canoe alongside the small dug-out lately left by the poor ferryman and the messengers. Meanwhile the old fellow's family, comprising two women and several children, hearing the noise, and seeing the survivors of the fusillade rushing up the pathway, ran out from their hut and joined them, all flying together to what they imagined to be their only point of safety; but no sooner had the unfortunates got down to the open ground beside the little dug-out than they received another volley from the fresh party lying in ambush. This practically finished them off, for their pursuers coming along hot-foot upon their track, fell upon them when dazed and killed them, sparing none.

From the point of view of the King of Gnongo's warriors, the arrangement had been a perfect success; the messengers sent to warn the folk they were about to attack, had been comfortably disposed of, and as for the old ferryman and his family, they were as well out of the way as not. There was nothing worth plundering in their hut, which was a disappointment, but otherwise the war chief who commanded this little branch expedition was quite satisfied. This being the case, the bodies of the slain, after receiving a few more cuts and hackings the better to attract the attention of the cannibal fish and crocodiles, were tossed into the waters. A canoe was then despatched down stream for their expectant companions, and in a short time the main body had joined the two detached sections.

On the site of the massacre they rested and fed until late in the evening. Then, slipping down the creek, they soon reached the main stream, and once more turning their canoes eastward, proceeded on their journey to the doomed town.

Before them they had a steady night-long paddle, passed with but short spells of rest and refreshment, and the silver-grey lights of morning were beginning to glimmer faintly up the eastern skies ere they reached the spot for which they were making. This was another narrow creek situated about three miles below the object of their attack, so straight and confined with mudbank and with mangrove that the canoes could only proceed in single file. From the point where it left the main river the creek ran inland about five miles, and then stopped suddenly at a curious mass of flat limestone rock that stood, a bare, barren patch, only some four feet above the surrounding ooze and slime.

Here the warriors disembarked, and passed a most uncomfortable day with only brackish water to drink, and swarms of busy mosquitos for company. These latter, however, were considered by the older warriors as rather an advantage than otherwise; for men, they argued, always fought better and more fiercely after being well worried by insects. No fires were lighted, and they wore out the day as best they might—eating and sleeping, or lying awake and grumbling. But the end of the day came at last, and then the well-baked rock, radiating back the sun warmth it had absorbed, was most grateful in the cooler hours of early night. A lovely African night it was—and where, indeed, is night not lovely?—but the murderous

scoundrels scattered about the stony flat had little thought of its beauties, and were busy preparing for the bloodthirsty carnage, rapine, and abominable cruelty of the morrow.

They had arranged to make their attack in the early hours of the morning, when the moon had gone down, and before the sun had risen—a time when their frightened quarry, startled out of their slumbers, would find less and less chance of concealment as the light grew stronger. About midnight a good meal was eaten, knives, cutlasses, muskets, and primings were seen to, calabashes refilled with rum from the general store, superfluous clothing discarded, and every preparation made for the coming contest; that is, if a struggle wherein the one side, harried out of their pleasantest sleep with the assistance of fire and fright, are attacked by the other, ready and long prepared to capture or to slay, can be called a contest. By the first hour of the morning the whole flotilla was astir, prepared and in order, and, looking in the dim starlight like some monstrous black snake or unshapely saurian, it slipped down the little creek and turned up the river, on whose placid waters the strong paddlemen swiftly and silently urged it over the few intervening miles that lay between it and the doomed town.

Upon their arrival at the landing-place some few hundred yards from the stockade, the canoes were drawn silently to land and secured in the usual manner by paddles and stakes thrust deep into the mud. Then, all having received their orders and knowing well what to do, the whole body of murderers crept silently across the clear space.

As an instance of negro stupidity and want of caution on both sides, there was not a sentinel anywhere or watchman to give warning of the approach of an enemy, and on the part of the attacking force not a single soul even was left to guard the canoes. Had but one of the unfortunate sleepers been awake and sharp enough to slip by a circuitous route to the point where the flotilla lay, he might have freed the whole lot of vessels from their moorings, fastened them together, and pushed off with them down stream. Had this been done not a soul of the attacking party would ever have got back to gladden his Kingship of Gnongo with victims for sacrifice or with their own presence, for the whole hinterland would have been aroused, common danger would have made common allies, and the raiders would have been “wiped out” without the slightest chance of escape. But it was not to be.

About a hundred yards from the western or water gate the Gnongos divided into two parties, and one half of the warriors, with their followers, passed quietly round and halted opposite the eastern or forest exit. Then, at a given signal—a single screech of the night-jar—the first party drew close up to the water gate, and both bands threw out men from either flank, the warriors and their attendants forming a complete cordon round the protecting stockade. When the circle was complete another signal—three hoots of the night-jar—was given, and a score or so of men advanced from a dozen different points, and with torches of different fibre dipped in oil, lighted and attached to long poles, they reached over the rough palisade and set fire to the dry, grassy thatch that covered the nearest huts. Such was its combustible nature that it burst into flame almost instantaneously everywhere—a fierce flame that in a few seconds lighted up everything near it, and went roaring and crackling skywards and right and left; but not a sound was uttered by the Gnongos; they were far too cunning. They had no desire for a desperate fight with their victims behind their stockade, and they knew that in the first excitement following the out-break of the fire the indwellers would think that it had arisen from some natural cause, and, flinging their rude gates wide, would rush into the open. Then would be the time to raise war cry and yell and shout, then would be the time to shoot and club and capture all they could, while chosen bands, detailed to make a dash for either gate, would be able to enter the town itself with the first rush back of the unhappy inhabitants.

Things fell out almost exactly as had been planned. At the first sound of the roaring, crackling flames the little streets were filled with frightened, naked creatures startled from their sleep or roused up just as they were waking in the early grey of morning. In a few seconds the whole population was out and about;

and as the flames spread and the narrow space grew hotter and hotter, the gates at either end of the town were flung open, and a bewildered, frightened mass of humanity—chiefly women and children—poured out into the open. Now came the chance of the attackers. Half mad with excitement, furious, and partly intoxicated with a mixture composed of rum and gun-powder, they fired a volley of slugs, and then, charging in among the almost paralysed multitude, commenced hacking, stabbing, and cutting right and left, while the attendants and paddle-men knocked down and secured as prisoners all they could lay their hands on. In a few moments the warriors, slashing a way through the crowd at the gates, forced an entrance into the town itself. And now began a slaughter—foul and furious; frenzied men, half armed, or only armed with such rude weapons as they could snatch up in the moment of attack, fought for life and freedom against their fierce and well-prepared assailants. Few, however, of the latter fell, and the resistance grew weaker and weaker, until presently, as portions of the stockade were destroyed or levelled to the ground, the great mass of the people flung themselves through the openings, screaming, hunted, terrified, maddened creatures, anxious only for flight, and thinking only of their present danger. Once outside in the open they had no chance whatever of making a stand, and were shot down, tripped up, clubbed, or hacked over in dozens, till in less time than it takes to describe it, the whole affair was finished so far as resistance was concerned. Some hundreds had been killed or captured, the only survivors being those who had escaped into the forest, where it was hopeless to follow them.

And now began a second scene of sack and outrage, and, if unconscious Nature feels, the new-born morning must have blushed to look upon the fearful orgie that took place beneath her eyes. Every imaginable cruelty, mutilation, and outrage were perpetrated upon their helpless captives by the maddened victors. Age or sex made no difference, and the only relieving circumstance in the whole tragedy was that the abominations were more spontaneous and less systematic and unnatural than they would have been had the village been captured by a raiding party of Arabs.

At last the victors, worn out by the violence of their own bestial passions, began to think of the main object of their expedition, which was to procure slaves for sacrifice. Some seventy or eighty of the strongest and best of their captives were selected to be conveyed back in the canoes, together with such plunder as the warriors were able to collect from the partially destroyed and still smoking ruins of the town. The rest of the captives—some hundred and seventy in number—were ruthlessly butchered, this slaughter being accompanied with every conceivable barbarism and cold-blooded devilry. It was the old baboon-like ferocity cropping up again and reasserting itself in the curious, complex negro character. Their own wounded were tended in a generally rude and boisterous manner, a bad cut or bruise received by a comrade being often only a source of merriment to his mates. Their dead were stripped, and buried in a large grave at the edge of the forest, and most of their mangled victims were gathered and flung—a ghastly heap—over the freshly turned soil. The captives were then distributed among the different craft and laid pell-mell in their bottoms, any that resisted or gave trouble being at once nailed by their hands or feet to the gunwales.

Shortly after midday all were ready for the return journey and they set out for the voyage home.

On their way down the river they put in for rest, among other places, at the little village they had approached in the guise of friends on their way up stream, but this time there was nobody to receive them. Either fugitives from the town had preceded them and raised the alarm, or having sent a second set of messengers to make sure that nothing had gone wrong with the first, these had discovered the fate of their former comrades and brought back the terrible news. One thing was certain—the inhabitants of the little village had departed, stock, lock, and barrel, greatly to the disappointment of the Gnongos, who had calculated on securing the whole of them, a disappointment that was avenged on the poor wretches, their captives.

As for these and their state during the voyage down the river, it were better not to inquire too closely. Occasionally they had a little water given them and a few scraps of food; but the most vivid and active imagination would utterly fail to realise their sufferings—cramped in the bottom of the vessels where they had been flung, tied so tightly in every kind of wretched attitude that their bonds often burst through the skin and almost ate into the bone, roasted by the pitiless sun, tortured with thirst, and in many cases actually nailed to the timber upon which they lay. Only those who have seen such things can but faintly realise their atrocity, and in part understand the awful abominations of which black Africa is daily a witness.*

I hold no brief for the white man, but I do not think that any reasonable person can be of two opinions upon the matter, viz. that better is the very worst and lowest form of European civilisation than the state of things existing in the man-sacrificing and hence man-raiding and often man-eating portions of the Dark Continent.

* Appendix, Note 7.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Jowè looked from his bedroom window the morning after his arrival at the Mission station across the river, and saw the glories of an African day breaking rich and strong over point and stream, and over the distant city that lay sparkling like a jewel upon the stretched forefinger of the land, he experienced many emotions, diverse as strange. Hitherto, after its peculiar fashion, life had gone pretty well with him, and even the sadness of his leaving England had in it a certain feeling of satisfaction and pleasure; for there is a pleasure in knowing that you are leaving kindly friends behind, even though the pang of parting itself be grievous and full of pain. The sorrows of that separation, however, had been dulled by the novelties of the voyage, and were no longer a burden; and but for a haunting though yet unshaped dread of the future, Jowè would have been thoroughly happy.

He had been made much of in his native land. Westeria, it should be explained, had been for some months without a Governor, and very dull in consequence: hence, if for no other reason, a hearty welcome had been accorded to Her Majesty's latest representative. Sound and marshalled show had not been wanting. Jowè was a favourite, having always made himself pleasant and useful, and so he had been included in the Governor's party, when landing from the steamship. This meant much, as from the outset he appeared as a person of some importance—not diminished by the welcome of the deputation from the Mission station across the river which shortly carried him off to his quarters in that pleasant spot.

Arnalf, now one of the principal authorities in charge of the Mission, had been present, and had greeted him most warmly; for Arnalf had kindly recollections of the bright little boy he had taken charge of in years past, as indeed had Jowè himself of the genial, earnest young man who had accompanied him to England, and, according to his lights, faithfully carried out his promise to the King of Gnongo.

Now, as Jowè gazed from his window, there was a strange familiarity about his environment that, despite the pleasurable sensations, at first almost frightened him. He was so accustomed to be surrounded by white faces that he was really hurt and surprised at himself to discover that black ones, in spite of their novelty, were even more sympathetic and agreeable. Stray words kept rising to his lips, stray sounds fell upon his ears with all the insistent sweetness of the memories of childhood. The very air about him seemed clearer and more exhilarating than the air of England, and the breezes went and came full of promise and possibility of—he knew not what.

Looking out over the Mission garden he sniffed up the sea breeze, mingled with the smell of the orange blossoms. He stretched his hands through the wide set casement and let the soft sunshine bathe his arms and chest, and as he did so the early cry of a native woman offering for sale *arruà*, a drink brewed from fermented rice water and pineapple juice, and other delicacies, struck him with the force almost of a stone from a sling; he gasped as he heard it. What was it he wanted? He was of that humanity, was part of it, and belonged to it, as much as the sunshine and the sweet smell of the morning. The thought at first alarmed, almost appalled him, but the sense of fear soon passed off, giving way to a very different feeling, if at present inchoate.

Roused out of these morning fancies by the sound of the breakfast bell, he descended to join his friend Arnalf and the latter's wife, the Gertrude of old, grown more matronly, but pretty as ever and kindly, if a bit sobered by the climate of the coast. With them was the Head of the Mission, the Rev. Mr. Johnston, and his spouse, a little, thin, severe-looking lady, but as tender and warm-hearted as she looked the reverse. White garb was the rule, with spotless white of napery and crockery ware on the breakfast-table; and Jowè felt the clean spirit of his surroundings, and appreciated them with heart and soul, happy in their consoling qualities and forgetful of his late yearning for *arruà*, husky voices, and smell of musty flesh.

During the meal he was as blithe as a bird, and, seeing he was in such good spirits, the principal shortly after it called him aside and informed him that, as soon as he had heard of his expected arrival, he had felt it his duty to inform the King of the Gngongos of the fact, and that a messenger, now returned, had been sent down from the king's chief town to say that on a certain date following a certain moon, fitting convoy would be despatched to Westeria to bring the king's son home with due and proper honour. Mr. Johnston, good man, broke the news to Jowè as best he might, and, seeing how it was received, deeply regretted the zeal and sense of duty that had so early led him to report the probable date of Jowè's arrival to his anxious sire.

"It was a pity I did it so promptly, my dear young friend, a great pity," he said; "I ought to have allowed myself time, and consulted your feelings and wishes in the matter: certainly, had I considered the affair as I ought, I would have done so. Yours is such an abnormal and extraordinary case, I really do not know what to think. Of course, you will have to go up and see your father. I can fully appreciate your difficulties, and understand the deep gulf that will make itself evident between those surroundings among which you have been brought up, and to which you have grown accustomed, and the very—I regret to say it—very barbarous state and circumstances in which it appears that the King of Gnongo lives. But he is an old man, I hear, and in the natural course of things must shortly go the way of all of us, and you must comfort yourself with the thought of the immense opportunities for good which your training and the position you hold will give you among the people you will, some day, no doubt be called upon to rule."

"I think, sir," said Jowè, and his head swam—"I think, sir, I had better go out and have a little quiet thought by myself upon the subject before I say anything."

"Quite right, quite right, my dear young friend," said the worthy but much perturbed missionary; "and do not forget that source from whence is derived all true comfort, the pole star to which you must turn for guidance in the very peculiar circumstances in which you are placed. I may add——"

But here Jowè could stand the dismal homily no longer, and with an "Excuse me, sir!" he went out from the room, relieving his adviser of his presence and of a duty with which he was not very well fitted to cope.

Poor Jowè! For the last few years the knowledge of his father had assailed his shuddering peace of mind like some horrid nightmare. He had on sundry occasions read short allusions to that potentate both in the religious and secular Press, and these, though far from complimentary, Jowè, in spite of himself, felt to be well merited. Nature had not dealt with him altogether harshly, while judicious training had made him a just and kindly being, and his more dark and unhappy instincts were as yet dormant. Oh that he had been the son of the humblest black woman in Westeria, rather than that of this dreaded and powerful monarch! In the one case he could have continued his evangelistic career, as he imagined, happily begun, winning the respect and kindly friendship of those about him, even if a high position had been beyond his reach.

But what was he to do with a terrible father like the one an unkindly fate had given him? The very boatmen in the port of Westeria itself quaked at his name, and not all the gold on the Coast would tempt a dozen of them to paddle a canoe or sail a boat up into the waters that flowed within his borders. Jowè had picked up scraps of ghastly stories, all the worse for the fact that those telling them had not done so directly to him, and had always tried to put him off and change the subject if questioned. All he had gathered had been heard by accident, or when the speakers thought that he was not listening or could not hear them. Jowè was not exactly brave in a physical sense, and his imaginative nature filled his mind with new horrors, worse, if that could be, than any possible reality, and with forebodings of danger, disgrace, and death, which were far from bringing him reassurance and consolation. He felt instinctively that he had not had the sort of education his father thought he was paying for, and though the whole thing was a misunderstanding, it was not a nice thing to have a misunderstanding with the King of

Gnongo. There was no help for it, but his forebodings grew blacker and blacker, until he almost gave way to blank despair, when suddenly the vision of Miss Maynard crossed his mind, falling upon his soul like the hand of the angel laid upon St. Peter in prison, and Jowè took new strength and courage. Poor fellow! His aspirations were hopeless, impossible, but he needed all the strengthening he could get that morning.

Long before the Gnongo warriors arrived to escort him home, he knew by a kind of instinct that they were near at hand. Many a single canoe had come and gone from the Gnongos to the Mission station in the past few years with messengers, payments, and presents, and the Mission flock had gradually become less alarmed at the sight of the warriors of the dreaded king; but when in the distance upon this occasion their canoes were made out coming down the river, there was a general feeling of uneasiness, and one or two of the more timid promptly sought shelter in the bush. It was no simple messenger or party of inferior war chiefs conveying presents or exchanging inquiries and civilities that was approaching this time, but a fleet of nearly a dozen canoes full of warriors, with many of the principal Juju men, who had in charge the most sacred fetish objects of the tribe. As they drew near the landing-place the paddlers began to shout praises of the king, churning the water up on either side of their long craft seemingly as fresh as if they had been just starting out upon a morning's paddle. The fetish men stood up, yelling and rattling their calabashes of odds and ends, and the warriors fired off their muskets and a small brass cannon lashed to a log in the bow of the largest of the canoes. It was all, however, kindly meant, and in honour and welcome of the king's son, who was promised thereby a rare home-coming.

Down at the little wharf the Rev. Mr. Johnston, the principal, Arnalf, and the other missionaries and masters at the station assembled to receive their guests. As they came nearer these ceased their antics, songs, and shoutings; the fetish men sat down, the warriors laid their muskets aside, and the crews paddled soberly and gently towards the shore. When they came alongside the little jetty the commanding war chief, accompanied by the king's "mail-bag," already referred to, and the fetish men, stepped ashore, and the chief, approaching Arnalf, whom he knew, and the principal, explained the object of his visit. He stated that he had brought the last instalment of the stipulated payment on behalf of Jowè's educational and other expenses, and also further presents to the Mission and those connected with it, and that he had been charged by his master to receive the Prince Jowè and escort him with due honour back to his father's capital.

The principal and Arnalf made fitting answers, and suggested that all should come ashore and rest for the day and night.

To this, however, the leader of the expedition demurred, explaining that the king's orders were urgent, and that they could only rest until nightfall, when they must depart with their precious charge.

After this had been settled, Jowè, who had hitherto kept behind his white friends, was brought forward and introduced, when the war chief instantly, with his fellows, made most abject obeisance to him. The chief then delivered a long message from the king, which, luckily, Jowè was able to follow, and to which he made fitting answer, thanks to the care with which his native tongue had been kept up during his sojourn in England. His sympathetic nature came to his aid as usual; he said that he was perfectly ready to go, and that he longed to see the home and the people he had left when a child, and of whom the memory had never faded from his mind. It is needless to say that Jowè's first impression upon his subjects was a favourable one, in spite of his white garments and generally unwarlike aspect.

"At the moonrise, and with the flowing of the tide, we will be ready to start," said the warrior chief, "and at that time the canoes of my lord the king's son will be prepared to convey him to the presence of my lord the king."

Jowè, repeating his promise that he would be ready, brought the palaver to an end, and the crews, warriors, and chiefs, retiring to the quarters prepared for them at some little distance from the Mission

buildings, and near an ample supply of water, refreshed themselves and rested in preparation for the journey.

The stars, still bright and sparkling, for the moon was but young, reflected on the water, danced and flickered over the rippling wavelets of the great river when a few hours later Jowè embarked with such baggage as he thought necessary to take to the home of his fathers. Some twelve years before Arnalf had made the same journey, and though man changes, Nature in its larger aspects is changeless and the same. Wherefore the rich waters still ran seaward, and the tide still flooded and ebbd as of old through many a thousand miles of tangled root and slime; the same landing-places were made for when rest and food became needful, and the same perilous reaches paddled swiftly over as when Arnalf brought the young boy Jowè down stream on their momentous voyage to Westeria and England. Now, grown to man's estate and upon his return journey, Jowè, though apprehensive, was not unhappy; the adventure was still novel, and his artificially acquired civilisation had not yet been shocked by word or act upon the part of his escort; indeed, the whole of the voyage, as far as the mouth of the lesser stream leading from the great river up into the heart of his father's domain, was got over without any untoward incident.

Up this smaller river the flotilla turned in the cool of a beautiful morning, and Jowè felt pleased that the first part of his travels had been free from any disagreeable occurrence, but his complacency was to be rudely shaken. There had been a good deal of drought that year, and things had not gone well with some of the royal and other plantations; in consequence there had been many crucifixions of young women and other appalling doings to death. Ghastly remnants of humanity hung on the trees of the execution ground, and a mass of headless corpses choked the slaughter creek despite the efforts of the alligators and their assistants, aided by the ebb tide, which detached and sent drifting out sundry mangled evidences of massacre; while the odour wafted down the little water-way leading to the local Aceldama was not calculated to bring pleasure to a civilised sense of smell.*

Jowè's senses were not yet blunted by horrid familiarity. "What is that?" he asked, in the Gnongo tongue. "I mean—what is the cause of that awful stench?"

The reply he received from the chief, and the details, given with evident gusto, need not be written here. It is enough to say that Jowè approached the principal town of his people in anything but good heart.

What his feelings were exactly he could not analyse. There was a dreadful sort of half-pleasure underlying all his loathing for the horrors narrated. Certain childish memories rose up in his mind—memories, in spite of himself, not altogether unagreeable, abhorrent though they were to the new Jowè that had been grafted upon the old. It was a hateful and abominable thing, stupid and uneconomic, to crucify young women and cut off heads wholesale with the idea that any benefit would be derived therefrom; but none the less it had a certain fascination. It would be interesting—he could not drive away the thought—to see someone crucified, and he could not help sympathising with the people who imagined that by so doing they could be of some mysterious service to or in some way propitiate the unknown powers that ruled the world. But presently he shook the vile imagination from him. The whole thing was horrible, abominable, and in a rush of better feelings these latent, whispering, wretched little instincts were swept away, and so, sorrowful at heart for himself and for his father, Jowè was paddled with triumphant shoutings and much firing of muskets up the last reaches of the Gnongo River to meet the yells and shouts and screams of a vast, dense crowd of his father's excited subjects. The crowd of perspiring black humanity, however, was not so beside itself as to be oblivious of the sonorous beating of the Obi drum at the Juju house. At the third beat a hush fell upon all, and, falling back and forming a broad lane up from the bank of the river to the central street of the town, they prostrated themselves to the ground, not daring so much as to look at the king's son until he had been received and acknowledged by his sire. Meanwhile Jowè, obeying dubiously the orders that had been given him, and taking his cue

* Appendix, Note 8.

from a sort of master of the ceremonies who had accompanied the expedition, advanced slowly towards the palace up the pathway amid the silent and almost breathless throng. Up the street—on—on to the palace and within its gates he passed, accompanied only by the chief Juju man, the head war chief and the master of ceremonies, until he stood before the king, when his attendants fell back, closed the door behind them, and left him alone with his father.

What transpired at that meeting was never known to anyone but Jowè and the king himself. There were no witnesses, for to his son the king could address himself in the first person without loss of royal dignity; conversation with all others etiquette compelled him to carry on only through the medium of a third party or mouthpiece.

Except his father, no man looked upon Jowè for the next few hours, which he passed in the king's palace attended to by the king's consorts and by numbers of young women who were nominally his own wives; and when he again appeared before the people he was no longer in European dress, but garbed and adorned as one of their own aristocracy—nay, rather as the king himself.

Grave, even sorrowful, he looked upon this his first official appearance; but whatever had been his experiences in the seclusion of the palace, he never related them.

As circumstances would permit, the poor fellow kept himself to himself as much as possible, and preserved a stoical demeanour, behaving much as some civilised, highly refined and educated Anglo-Saxon would do under similar restraint; loathing his present inability to escape from it, and determined to endure the immediate misery with the patience of a martyr, while ceaselessly passing through his brain schemes of change and escape with a dogged perseverance and settled determination worthy of a Latude or a Casanova.

But as the hours passed he began to be oppressed by a horrible feeling that, underneath the loathing which he had for certain of the sights and sounds and acts seen and heard about him, there was a peculiar and not altogether unpleasant something that thrilled his nature—a something that he fought against and overthrew as occasion arose, but which he was powerless to stamp out and utterly abolish. A thing that seemed to gather new strength from each fall; a thing that returned with more strength and vehemence the more it was driven out; a demon something destined to obsess him and utterly master him in the end.

The feelings of that hoary old ruffian, his father, would be difficult to analyse; he was disappointed undoubtedly, very disappointed. Here was his son, whom he had hoped to see return a sort of glorified edition of Smith the trader, his old friend and agent of former days—his son whom he had hoped to find gifted with a wide knowledge of mechanics and a thorough familiarity with machine guns—things of which the old man had only heard, but which he longed to possess—restored to his bosom without any knowledge of them whatever. As for ordinary ordnance and small arms and a practical acquaintance with the forge—for, as among our own northern ancestors, the most important man a tribe in most parts of Africa can have among its members is a good blacksmith—here was a son restored to him who understood none of these things! And yet the old king could not but admit that, though Jowè was not learned in the manner in which he had expected him to be, he had acquired much knowledge of a sort; and even when he had been deprived of the imaginary advantage which European clothing had given him, and was arrayed like himself and the other chiefs, he felt that, except in mere brute strength, Jowè was in every way a superior being.

Within his own royal inclosure and beside his own royal palace, the king had built an equally fine dwelling for his son, and, according to his lights, had furnished it in a manner worthy of him—that is to say, he had supplied Jowè with wives by the dozen and slaves by the score. Certain revenues and monopolies had been assigned to him and all his wants most carefully considered and attended to. In the new building Jowè took up his residence.

Being a kindly creature, at least by impulse, on his very first spare evening, by way of amusing his devoted and grinning attendants, whose attempts to please often bored when they did not actually distress him, he determined to produce some of his conjuring apparatus and show them a few simple tricks.

It should be explained that when teaching in the Institute school in England, Jowè had among his pupils the little daughter of a travelling conjurer and professor of magic, Signor Casani. In return for numerous kindnesses to this child, the magician had taught him many of his best tricks, and under his tuition Jowè had become a very fair, not to say expert, conjurer himself. To this he doubtless first owed the notice and tolerant friendship of Lady Tumbling.

Little did Jowè imagine when amusing himself and little Dora Casani with his blunders and attempts at legerdemain under the sympathetic supervision of her father, what an immense service this instruction would render him at an important crisis of his life.

His audience of wives, slaves, and other attendants, with the chiefs and warriors appointed to do him honour and carry out instantly his every behest, even to the immediate beheading of half a dozen of his father's subjects, were bidden to look upon him, and with all eyes they looked. Hitherto in their inmost hearts they had not thought much of their prince, at least so far as the possession of any special power was concerned. But now when he retired to the inner room in which his baggage—which he had not permitted, in spite of many attempts, any of his numerous retinue to meddle with—had been stored, and brought out a few mysterious odds and ends, which he arranged upon the best apology for a table that could be procured, they were all attention. Somewhat dubious yet fearful were they of the results, for though he evidently was not a great warrior, they knew that there was a power greater than that of the greatest war chief, and this power their prince might possibly possess.

The sympathetic Jowè instinctively felt the pulse of his audience and knew that it was a very shaky one. His best tricks, he wisely said to himself; he would keep in reserve, and so, informing the onlookers that he was going to bring out of his mouth the parents of all the parasites that had in the past afflicted the Gnongo tribe, he proceeded to pull from that orifice, before the awe-struck and horrified spectators, a seemingly endless length of white worm, or snake. While they still gazed, spell-bound, the white thing turned scarlet before their very eyes, and still it came.

That was enough for the occasion, for Jowè was left forthwith without an audience. Hastily putting away for another and more suitable season the few paraphernalia he had brought out, and removing all traces of the terrible worms, he resumed his seat almost overcome with laughter. But his amusement was not the only gratification. He saw in these simple conjuring tricks the certainty of freedom from control and the means of returning to civilisation whenever he wished to do so.

His audience meanwhile had not gone far: they had gone to the king. Lying prone before that monarch they paid him homage and with leaden lips hailed him as the father of the greatest Juju man ever born.

Their intrusion, the informality of their approach, a hundred and one offences against the etiquette of the palace were all forgiven them for the sake of the wonderful news they bore. Forthwith the king and all his courtiers then present, with the war chiefs, the ministers, their attendants, and last, but not least, the Juju priests, crossed the courtyard in a body to Jowè's house. Solemnly the king's stool-bearer carried the royal stool before his master, and, arriving at the right spot, placed it opposite the prince: solemnly the old king sat down upon it, and his companions having ranged themselves in due order behind and alongside of him, they awaited developments.

As has been said, it was against etiquette for the king to speak directly to anyone except his son, and even then there were restrictions: they must be alone. But the occasion admitted of no delay, and so the anxious old man, waving aside his "mouth-piece," addressed his wonder-working off-spring in the

presence of his followers. Rumour had flown far and quickly, quacking as it flew, and rumour has the Tarasconian habit of embroidery.

"Jowè, my son," said the king, "these have told me," and here he pointed to Jowè's attendants, who had returned to their posts, "that you have before their eyes brought up out of your mouth the fathers of all the worms and snakes that have troubled our people, and they tell me that some were white and some were red. Is this true, my son?"

"The king's servants have seen them," replied Jowè, the diplomatist.

At this confirmation of the story by the king's son, a kind of palsy shook the throng of new-comers, and the old king himself was visibly moved.

"My son," he said, "I know that the white men are great, and if they have bestowed their powers upon you and made you a priest and Juju man, great even as their own magicians, I am thankful for what they have done, and it will be of good for our people; but, my son, I, your father, would also behold these marvels."

"I will consider, O my father," said Jowè, who was a born actor, and, bowing his head, he covered his face with his hands, remaining thus for about a minute. Then, raising his head, he said simply, amid dead silence, "Bring me an egg, and see," he added, "that it be a fresh one."

Jowè had already prepared a trick for his former audience, which their prompt evacuation of his premises had prevented him making use of, and so now he had only to bring back the paraphernalia he had put away.

An egg was produced in a few seconds and handed with much reverence and many misgivings to the conjurer, who promptly exchanged it for one of his own, without the least suspicion on the part of his audience. The latter he now proceeded to palm, singing meanwhile the first thing that came into his head, which happened to be a rather monotonous Sunday-school hymn, and, while he sang, the egg, at least to the awe-struck onlookers, appeared to be endowed with life, or at any rate with an amazing capacity for passing through solids. For it disappeared through one of Jowè's ears and came out at the other, returning through this latter organ, only to be produced out of the top of his head; then it disappeared in his armpit and came out at his knee, went in at his knee and came out at his elbow, and finally vanished in the mouth of this wonderful prince, who, leaning forward and remarking that his father had been the victim a few days ago of an evil charm brought about by—here he mentioned the name of a certain friendly but, unfortunately for themselves, not very powerful neighbouring tribe—drew, before the eyes of all present, the wondrous egg from his dumbfounded parent's navel.

To say that the King of Gnongo and his warriors and Juju men were astonished would be to put the matter very mildly. Their amazement was ludicrous. But Jowè had not yet finished. Presently he ordered the principal Juju priest to crack the egg, which was done in fear and trembling, while the conjurer explained that the egg had got so hot in passing from his body to the king's that it had become hard boiled and capable of holding in its mass the evil spell he had spoken of, which would now be displayed. Then, taking the broken egg from the trembling Juju man, he proceeded to draw from it a thin, black worm of about a yard in length—or rather a horsehair introduced through a fine hole into the egg before it had been boiled. Scarcely a foot of the horsehair had appeared before fear gave way to anger—furious anger on the part of the war chiefs and the king against the malignant tribe who had dared to practise their filthy spells upon the royal person—mingled with intense gratitude to Jowè, who had thus defeated their wicked machinations, and a deep reverence for the powerful Juju man which their king's son had proved himself to be. War, instant war against the wicked tribe and their utter extermination were vociferously demanded.

Jowè was for a moment appalled at the storm he had raised, but his ready wit came to his assistance, and once more he spake.

"If, my father," he said, "you destroy these people, the thing will not be good. You will lose their tribute and you will confound the innocent with the guilty." A nice distinction which his audience hardly comprehended, but none the less, for the time being, allowed to pass. "All have not done this thing, but only a few, and if any of them escape, which is possible, they will renew the spell, and I may not be able a second time to remove it. But if you allow me, I will lay a counter spell upon the guilty parties which will bring them to confusion and to a miserable end, and all will then know what a powerful presence you have in the person of your son."

Curiosity to see the new spell that Jowè proposed to lay upon their enemies was too much for their other feelings, and the king, with the grunted approval of his warriors, submitted to Jowè's reasoning, and requested him to be quick and show them the new enchantment.

"This, then," said Jowè—producing, apparently from nowhere, and holding forth in his hand a small, round, grey object, which was, indeed, neither more nor less than a "Pharaoh's serpent"—"is the egg of a snake-spirit; it is a great charm, and will work powerfully to protect you and to injure your enemies. But you shall see."

Here Jowè placed it carefully upon the floor before his father and called for a firestick.

In a few moments this was brought in, and Jowè, lighting the "Pharaoh's serpent," handed the stick back to the bearer and resumed his place, praying that the thing would work well, which, as a matter of fact, it did. For there, indeed, before the astounded gaze of the king and courtiers, to the accompaniment of stifling smoke and choking odour, a snake or worm apparently developed itself from nowhere, and finally, after the fumes and smoke had lifted so that it could be seen clearly, lay, tangible and actual, a loathly and a fearsome object. It is needless to say that none would go near it or have aught to do with it till Jowè, telling them that it was now burnt to ashes, and that all that was required was that these ashes, which he carefully raised and placed in a little vessel, should be thrown into the river and allowed to drift down stream in the direction of their enemies, closed the séance for the day and bowed himself out. But not before the king had so far forgotten himself and his dignity as to embrace his son publicly ere retiring with his court to his own quarters.

Not many hours elapsed before Jowè's marvellous exploits had been noised throughout the town, and very soon they became the common property of the nation and its dependencies. The tribe mentioned by Jowè as guilty of the evil charm laid upon the king heard of what had taken place in due course, with the result that they themselves, in abject fear, selected certain victims, and, despatching them forthwith, sent their heads with other more profitable presents and much tribute to the King of Gnongo to avert the threatened storm. This spontaneous testimony to Jowè's powers yet further, if that were possible, increased the respect for them among his own people, and his father was quite consoled for his son's want of knowledge of Gatling and Gardner guns and trifles of like nature.

The king blessed the memory of the old trader and thanked fate that he had been moved to send his son abroad for his education. It was evident, he thought, that he had been turned into the equivalent of a first-class white Juju man, and therefore could doubtless influence the gods for the general good. As for his not being able to lead in war, what of it? War chiefs were easy enough to get; there were plenty of them. Scores of brave warriors would his son have for slave-raiding and carrying out his commands, while he himself remained safe and strong at home, the guiding spirit of the nation, a great and powerful Juju king, full of the knowledge that the white men possess and not afraid of the devils that walk by night or of the ghosts that lurk in the deep woods in the daytime, and, like the white men, fearless of the spirits of the dead.

So reasoned the old king, and his reasoning was sound enough from his point of view. In the meantime Jowè tasted such fruits of success as could be gathered from the Gnongo tree, and enjoyed such power and popularity as his people were able to bestow upon him.

But power and popularity were not good for him. Success told against him, as it has told against many a greater soul before him, for familiarity with evil things first brought indifference, which was followed by interest, and the interest by a toleration not far removed from sympathy and appreciation. He looked upon some of his wives with a less unkindly eye, with far less horror than he ought to have done upon some of the rites and sights he was, in virtue of his birth, admitted to behold in the Juju house. Partly did he fall, but by a supreme effort he rallied, and on his knees, with tears and anguish, repented his lapse, only to slip once again into barbarism, again with tears and agony to repent. Poor Jowè! He was not to go under without an effort to escape the cruel fate—the ruin of body and soul—that surely awaited him if he remained in the sacred city of the Gnongos.

It was the return of the slave-raiding expedition—organised in his honour and described in the previous chapter—that spurred him to strong resolve, broke the back of his more unholy imaginings, and sent him sick at heart and in agony of repentance, once more into the ways of virtue. The arrival of canoe-load after canoe-load of poor wretches in every stage of misery and exhaustion—hungry, thirsty, wounded, agonised, dead, and dying, with their hands or feet nailed to the gunwales, sides, or bottoms of the craft—was too much for his nerves. He could not stand by unmoved and see them jerked out on the shore by an unfeeling crew of devils who, mocking their agony meanwhile with demoniacal laughter, tore the miserable victims from their fastenings with as little compunction as butchers unhooking, previous to cutting them up, the senseless carcasses of sheep or pigs hanging in a shop.

Jowè did not wait to see the great festival of human sacrifices that was to commence next day, but hastily inventing an excuse, backed by some legerdemain which confounded the bloodthirsty potentate, his father, he won not only consent to return to Westeria, but rich presents for his friends. So, with many promises to guide and sustain the affairs of the nation wherever he might be by means of his magical powers, Jowè shook the dust of his native town from his feet, and started on his journey to the Mission station at the coast.

Poor fellow, he had supped deep on horrors, and the voyage down the smaller river, and afterwards along the shore of the great one, remained in his memory in the semblance of an awful sleepless night following a terrible dream—a horrible phantasmagoria from which he had awakened in a cold sweat and agony of soul. But, alas! much as he loathed his recent experiences, it was not the same Jowè now returning to Westeria, to civilisation, and to his old companions, that only a few days before had left them to visit his father.

CHAPTER VIII.

“DO you know,” said Lady Tumbling, addressing Miss Maynard, “that Mr. Jowè has come back from seeing his father, that awful old King of Gnongo? Sir Thomas told me so this morning. I expected him to have been eaten,” added her ladyship with pardonable inaccuracy—for Jowè’s tribe were not cannibals*—“or at least done to death in some dreadful way, when his fond parent found out that he had a missionary and not a blacksmith for an heir. But I am very glad indeed, poor fellow, that he has escaped. We must have him up here. Let me see, to-day is Thursday—Friday—Saturday; we cannot have him on Sunday. No—yes. Sunday will do; we will have him to lunch on Sunday and hear all about his adventures.”

Miss Maynard said nothing, but she was glad that Jowè had escaped. She had been interested in him, nothing more, and she was beginning to think that even the little interest she had felt was too much for any white girl to acknowledge, particularly when she remembered what he had said to her on board the *Benin*. Mr. Hinton’s anger at finding them together had not escaped her notice, and as that gentleman’s views and opinions had become of vastly more importance than the friendship of Jowè, it was quite natural that she should think as she did.

“Yes,” continued Lady Tumbling, “I like the poor fellow very much; it is a pity he is black. He was very good and kind on board the steamer; you remember how he amused the boys?”

Here the boys burst into the room in search of their governess and promptly flung themselves upon her with shouts and laughter.

“Steady—steady!” cried their mother, checking their wild rushes. “I want to tell you that Mr. Jowè is coming here on Sunday. You will like to see him, won’t you?”

“I should just think so!” said Jack the ready.

“Rather!” added Freddy the demure.

So the matter was settled, and Jowè was asked to lunch at Government House on the following Sunday. With the formal invitation went an added request that he would stay the evening, have romps in the afternoon with the boys, and tell the older folk all his adventures.

The note of invitation brought joy to Jowè. He had arrived safely at Westeria, and was staying at the Mission, endeavouring to forget his recent terrible experiences. Though those horrors were so very brief, he felt that by contact with their perpetrators he had sunk low indeed, almost into barbarism, and he had not settled in his own mind how he was to pick up the threads of civilisation once more, consequently he was deeply grateful to Lady Tumbling. Meanwhile he had a few days in which to recover his peace of mind. They passed quietly, and but for recent events which came upon him, as it were, in windy gusts and sudden squalls of conscience accompanied by great searchings of heart, he would have been happy. However, he was at least once more a Christian and a gentleman, free to sleep in pyjamas and alone in a bedroom, instead of upon a mat in a hut—miscalled a palace—surrounded by a score or so of negresses who claimed to be his wives. Things were indeed different now, and he meant to keep them so; he would not despair.

Strange to say, his late experience had helped to make him more hopeful of attaining the supreme desire of his heart. He would make full use of his opportunities and trust to chance and to a supple wit.

The vision of Miss Maynard was never absent from his dreams. She had been kind to him; she did not despise his accursed colour as he felt all other whites did, however good-natured and friendly they might be. He felt she did not; at least, she had not shown that she did. Awful fear! She might change now that she was out in this Africa, thrown into contact with so much that was black—and abominable, as none knew better than he. But then he tried to comfort himself. “Faint heart——,” said Jowè. But alas!

* Appendix, Note 9.

the proverb was of another race and had no application when used between those of different species; but he put this unpleasant realisation from him. He felt himself white, and, poor fellow, if ever anything came near making him a "white man," it was the really noble passion he had for the fair English girl. "Whatever befall," he told himself, "I have still hope, and idle and foolish though it may be, I can keep that. No one can rob me of hope."

With the sweet smell of the jessamine in his nostrils and the mild, sea-tempered flower-fragrant breezes playing about his face, Jowè passed up the avenue to Government House on the appointed Sunday forenoon in good time for his lunch.

There is no need to describe the meal or the visitors; similar luncheon parties and sets of guests are under like circumstances to be found assembled almost anywhere throughout our colonial possessions.

Lady Tumbling was an excellent hostess, and Sir Thomas kind and genial, as usual, courteous and attentive to all, but giving no man more than just his proper due and need of attention according to established etiquette.

After lunch, when the guests were somewhat dispersed, and some, indeed, had left, Lady Tumbling sent for the boys.

"Mr. Jowè," she said, "the children are coming to see you; they never cease talking about you and are longing to meet you again; they are wild for you to show them some of your old tricks."

Here the young gentlemen came in and rushed up to Jowè with every expression of affection and approval.

"Be quiet, boys! Be quiet!" said Lady Tumbling. "You are not to be so rough; I will not have you romping about like that. It is too hot here for romps."

"Excuse me, Lady Tumbling, I think in your invitation I was summoned to a romp," said Jowè.

"Did I write it so?" her ladyship rejoined. "It must have been recollections of 'board ship' that made me put in the word, but I assure you I never meant you to be pulled about on shore in that unceremonious fashion. You must remember you are not on ship board," she added to the pickles, and gradually she brought them into a calmer mood. "You may take Mr. Jowè out into the verandah," she went on, presently; "I daresay he will be good enough to show you some of your friends the animals that he used to make with his handkerchief, and perhaps a few of his other tricks. We will meet again a little later, when you get tired of those imps, Mr. Jowè," she continued, turning to her other guests; and Jowè went off with the boys.

He had come well provided to amuse his little friends, and for two hours or so he made them happy, and the three, or rather the four, for they were joined in a few moments by Miss Maynard, revelled in tricks and jokes and remembrances of the voyage out, and had what our American cousins would call "a good time generally."

But like all other good times, it came to an end when one of the liveried domestics attached to Government House brought them a summons to tea. Only Jowè, however, went to the drawing-room, for Miss Maynard marched her charges off to the nursery. Not that she had to go as a matter of duty, for, being more a friend of the family than a paid teacher, she could do as she pleased. Doubtless her visit to the nursery arose from an instinctive feeling that it was better for her not to be seen entering the drawing-room upon too friendly terms with her ladyship's black protégé.

Only Lady Tumbling and one or two particular friends were taking tea when Jowè entered. These, however, made him welcome. The conversation at first comprised the usual commonplaces, far too trivial to be repeated here, did they not accentuate in a remarkable manner the difference between the civilisation at Westerina and the barbarism from which Jowè had escaped.

"Coffee, Mr. Jowè?"

"No, thank you, Lady Tumbling; I prefer tea."

"You take it strong, do you not?"

"Yes, please. Strong, with plenty of sugar."

"And milk?"

"No milk, thanks."

"Can I give you any of these?"

"Nothing to eat, thank you."

"How did they behave?"

"The boys were very good."

"You say so in your good nature. They must have given you a lot of trouble."

"No, not the least trouble, I assure you." And then Jowè leisurely drank his tea and there was silence for a space. The silence, however, was shortly broken by Lady Tumbling.

"Mr. Jowè, we want to know all about your expedition up the river to see—to see—well, your people," said Lady Tumbling.

"My old father, your ladyship," said Jowè, straightforwardly.

"Well, yes; but I did not mean him particularly. I meant the other—all the other——"

"Savages?" suggested Jowè.

"Well, if you put it that way," said Lady Tumbling, "I suppose I must say yes. We were very anxious to know about them, and what you, an educated man——"

"Thank you," said Jowè, "I will tell you what I think you will find interesting": and as he said these words Miss Maynard came in, and Jowè felt he must rise to the occasion, and this, with his sympathetic audience to help him, he did.

He spoke well, as he always did, and was able, by his clever way of putting things, to convey to his listeners a great deal more than he actually said. In a very few moments his audience was completely his own, and followed him through his adventures with the warmest sympathy.

Almost before he had finished, the brief evening of the tropical day was merging into night, and Jowè's story came to an end. As the guests rose to go, Lady Tumbling turned to Miss Maynard.

"Will you entertain Mr. Jowè while I see my friends off?" she said, and followed the other ladies out of the room.

As the door closed behind them, Jowè felt that the supreme moment of his existence had arrived.

The moon was already mounting from the horizon as the sun sank beyond the wide expanse of ocean in the west, and the last golden, hazy glimmering of the brief tropic semi-twilight bathed and flooded land and sea, and filled all things with a deep sense of peace.

The hawk-moths were beginning to stir abroad, while the house lizards, leaving their chinks and crannies, clucked along the walls below the rafters; the moon-flower opened her petals in preparation for the night, and the jessamine shook sweet odours from her chalices. Like incense to heaven rose the perfume of the frangipani, while the low humming of a myriad insects round the wealth of bud and blossom suggested a distant slumber-song or evening hymn.

All this and more went to make a moment of supreme emotion; the soft breath of Nature half asleep that came in at the windows told Jowè that now, if ever, was his chance. But at his first words, though sweet and kind as ever she had been, Miss Maynard let him see the gulf, deep and wide, that lay between them—that only in a limited sense could she consider him her equal. She was sorry for him—and no woman could have been more kind. No word of resentment at his presumption did she utter. But perhaps it was well that Lady Tumbling returned so opportunely.

"I must apologise for being so long away," she said; "but I expect you have found lots to talk about. We want you to stay to dinner, Mr. Jowè. My husband would like to hear all about what you have been doing."

But Jowè would not stay, would not face the lamps that were now being brought in, and, in spite of all Lady Tumbling's pressing invitations, would do no more than promise to come again soon. How he left the house he did not know.

His first thought, when alone, was to kill himself, the next to kill somebody else; but no, it would do no good, it was his fate. There was only one cure for his disappointment—work. When he had felt ill and depressed at Beulah House after his anatomical experiences, he had worked and got all right; he must do so again—work, work, that would put him right.

So he plunged heart and soul into work in the hope that occupation would not only help him to forget Miss Maynard, but would also still and charm away those half-formulated longings for something else, he knew not what, which now so often rose up within him at the thought of the horrid sights he had seen, and he scarcely dared confess it to himself—but only half disapproved.

And so time went on, and Jowè, who had definitely joined the Mission at Westeria, for the present as a lay teacher, became a most interesting and, it may be said, important person in the colony. His father, moreover, had not further troubled him, for, hearing what a great “white Juju man” he had become, the King of Gnongo was quite content to support him liberally at the coast. For was not his own great prosperity and that of his people due to the efficacious prayers and enchantments of his son?—a belief, indeed, which Jowè rather encouraged than suppressed.

Jowè's class for more advanced male students soon became the admiration of the settlement, for he was an excellent lecturer, and got his pupils on famously. He was often asked to take a class for young ladies, there being a very large number of black damsels, “young lady pupils,” at the Mission, but he would never consent. He feared the tongue of calumny perhaps, or perhaps the recollection of his experiences among the Gnongos forbade.

To make up for this, however, he instituted a Scripture class for little girls, with regard to whom, indeed, there could be no scandal, owing to their tender age, and to this class numbers of the local coloured residents sent their children. With these young people Jowè got on so well—as, indeed, did the youngsters under his able tuition—that even the Governor's wife, with Miss Maynard and the “pickles,” occasionally attended his classes, often accompanied by one or two of their friends with their children. Furthermore, the Governor himself presided at the half-yearly treat which Jowè gave his pupils; for European methods of reward had been introduced, as well as European and most approved methods of imparting instruction. In all this was Jowè well advised and well employed, and busied in these things alone would he have continued had he been wise; but he did not know this, and did not keep only to them, for had he known whither wisdom led, and followed after it, this story would never have been written.

But now, alas! his adult black brothers began to be of interest to him, and he commenced to investigate their ways, especially those secret customs which so few Europeans have ever observed, debarred as they have been in most cases by the difference of colour and the want of an intimate knowledge of strange and difficult languages. Unfortunately, as Jowè continued his secret studies, led to peer and pry into the unregenerate natives' doings by some irresistible fascination, the stronger grew his interest in them. Little by little he acquired a knowledge of their faiths and beliefs, and although a sceptic when he began to investigate the mysteries of Obi and the truths and likelihoods of kindred matters, he did not long remain a sceptic, for with him to study these spawnings of darkness and the devil was to believe in them, and to believe in them was to be many days' journey upon the high road to perdition.

Not all at once did Jowè go down; his degeneration, as is usual in cases such as his, was progressive, though at the same time rapid enough; for Miss Maynard, with whom he was not infrequently thrown in contact, and from whose eyes the scales had been disagreeably removed by her growing knowledge of the country, could now clearly perceive the subtle differences that, manifesting themselves even in him, laid

open before her the infinite gulf that separates the negro from the white races. Still, however, out of a sort of pity she was kinder to him than perhaps she would have been had she met him for the first time after a year or two's residence in Africa. Her growing distrust was entirely instinctive, however, for from her chief admirer, Mr. Hinton, she heard nothing to Jowè's disadvantage, nor indeed from anyone else—in fact, few knew of anything to his discredit, and apparently he was still the most exemplary of young men.

There was no one probably in Westeria who could have said anything very definite about his underground doings and gropings, except possibly the European captain of the force of military police, and he only at second-hand and from information received from an old Arab in his service. This fellow practised as a sort of medicine man among the blacks, and possessed considerable influence with the Houssas, who, however, were mostly Mahomedans;* nevertheless, it was owing to the intimacies he was able to form through the latter that he got to know a great deal of what was going on in the real pagan negro quarter and among the population generally.

Jowè's actions were sometimes not quite edifying, while his thirst for knowledge led him into strange places. Abdullah had heard of his consulting old Father Ibo, of a goat that had been killed there, and of a cock which had been found torn and mutilated hard by his little garden. Jowè had been seen coming out of the forest at curious times of the night, when all decent citizens were supposed to be in bed. To his friends at the Mission he had volunteered the information that he had become an enthusiastic collector of certain of the nocturnal Lepidoptera, and particularly of the Sphingidæ; but the few broken specimens which he accumulated in his rooms argued more zeal and energy than scientific carefulness in these late entomological expeditions.

The old Arab police spy, however, was not to be taken in, and he stigmatised Jowè's forest wanderings and his visits to various mysterious and doubtful characters as Shaitan work.

Meanwhile, upon the surface, Jowè flourished; great was the confidence reposed in him, and his lectures and classes were the pride of the Mission.

But, alas! under the influence of the climate and his surroundings, Jowè was now rapidly deteriorating. The good seed had fallen in shallow soil, and though it sprang up quickly enough, it soon began to wither away when the sun-rays of heredity, instinct, and inclination beat upon it. That which he had been taught was a thing of faith: a possibility, indeed—nay, a probability—but it was far off, intangible. That which he saw about him was fact—interesting, horrible fact—something that gratified all the more animal desires of a nature in which the fire of the spirit had never really been kindled to a flame, if indeed it had had in him any existence whatever. His higher lights were only the flashes from a species of sublimated sympathy; his highest were not very high. It was no uncommon case.

One night Jowè was returning through the forest beyond the Settlement clearing, which almost bordered the great garden of Government House, from a visit to an old woman who was reckoned a kind of high priestess in Obi matters. Half stupefied by the pungent smoke, he had been sitting in her hut for hours, listening to the many strange things that she had to tell him. At last, feeling an intense thirst, he had asked for something to drink, and very probably had been given some drugged liquor. However that may have been, he had eventually reeled away from her hovel with his brain on fire.

As he stumbled along he suddenly became aware of the sound of the Obi drum throbbing through the forest before him, but to the right—a strange monotonous note that thrilled his every nerve and fibre as with a call for him to come. In spite of certain half-hearted arguments and accusations urged against himself by his conscience for heeding the sound, he listened eagerly and then stood still. But his good angel beckoned him onward, and as the note died away, in obedience, as it were, he rushed along the path, struggling to get away from the blackness of the forest that lay before, behind, and around him. Reeling, stumbling, groping, he pushed on between the walls of undergrowth, and well would it have been

* Appendix, Note 10.

for him if he had kept up his flight. But suddenly, as he paused to take breath, from a little clearing on his right hand there came once more the strange resonance, followed by four taps upon a smaller wooden drum. He shuddered at the sound, and again started to run. It was not to be. Again the notes fell upon his ears, breaking the breathless stillness of the night, and his attention was fixed. Another brief interval and he heard them yet again. This time the drum was beaten steadily.

Tap-it-i—tap! Tap-it-i—tap! Tap-it-i—tap!

A cold perspiration broke out over him. He no longer found the noise hateful, but pleasing and exciting.

Tap-it-i—tap! Tap-it-i—tap!

The old abhorrence and fear were oozing out at his finger-tips. Next moment a strange ecstasy took possession of him; he turned down the path towards the clearing whence the sound seemed to proceed, and in a few minutes found himself in the presence of a number of men and women who had just begun one of their semi-religious dances. Most of them were naked, or nearly so, and to all seeming none of them observed the intruder. As Jowè gazed upon the scene, distinct in the moonlight, he felt that his clothes hurt him. They were fire-hot upon his body; his shoes confined his feet, pressing them and burning them. In a moment he had flung off coat and shirt. Trousers, boots, vest, and drawers followed. He was naked himself!

Tap-it-i—tap! Tap-it-i—tap!

Jowè was no longer what he had been; he felt that he was a man—not a fool, a white fool. At last he felt like his skin.

Tap-it-i—tap! Tap-it-i—tap! Tap-it-i—tap!

Flinging aside the now hateful signs of civilisation, he reeled among the crew and joined in the dance, timidly at first—no, not timidly. It was new to him, and he was uncertain of the movements. Only for an instant did he hesitate; the next moment he dashed his stomach against that of a gigantic black opposite to him. Their knees came together with a jerk and a crack. Down went the burly negro as though shot. Jowè kept his balance, and stood swaying to the strange rhythm, and crooning out the song that through the ages, maybe, has had a like accompaniment, filled with a strange frenzy, strong—the stronger for its long repression—ecstatic, delicious.

It was a dance indeed! As the fun grew more fast and furious, one after another the women joined in—eager, raging, rampant as the men, the two sets of dancers forming a short irregular line from which every moment performers dropped out panting, and joined the onlookers, while others took their places in the ranks. Dropped out, did I say? Nay, rather were they knocked out. The dance had not begun furiously, for all the actions at first were gone through in subdued excitement, and with a slowness of movement which for this very reason was more impressive than any wild extravaganza of riot would have been. But as the drum beat quicker and quicker the rabble became more furious and disorderly; excited bystanders rushed in among the regular dancers and out again, until at length the whole scene attained a pitch of fury and abandon not to be described. What the saturnalia resembled, and what followed it, those will know who, like myself—the spirit of curiosity and investigation being stronger than any restraint of prudence or thought of self-preservation—have lain in the bushes hard by, at considerable risk, to say the least of it, and watched, unseen, the whole nightmare performance. Those who have done so, I say, will know all about it; those who have not are perhaps better without the knowledge.

The spectacle, however, which I have described was only the first of the mysteries, if so they can be called, in which Jowè was initiated. From bad he went to worse, until, followed by a long procession of evil deeds, and no longer a neophyte in the band of beastly brethren, he at length found himself deriving unspeakable gratification from, and taking part in, the horrid ceremony of the butchery, division, and

consumption of the “hornless goat,”* after having eaten of child’s flesh, accomplished the “Parroh rite,”† and become wholly one of themselves.

* Appendix, Note 11.

† Appendix, Note 12.

CHAPTER IX.

IT is curious, but characteristic of the race, that the negro must either be careless, shallow, and but little concerned with anything save the immediate needs of the day, or, if he goes deeper into the things about him, must develop in its darkest depths the cannibalism to which I have already alluded.

Of course I am not speaking here of the numerous laudable exceptions. There have been many worthy sons of Africa who, held in by more happy environment, the force of circumstances, example, and the pressure of surrounding white or mixed peoples, have never shown the striking characteristics which almost invariably manifest themselves when the negro is left to his own devices, and allowed to develop along the animal or purely physical plane of least resistance.*

A malignant kind of devil-worship or devilishness seems to draw the black to itself, and enthrall him when it is not opposed by any of the forces I have mentioned. Of course, I am not writing of the exceptions, but of the mass, the raw, ugly mass of black men and women who have nothing but themselves to lean upon, and only their own natural bent to follow, and further, I am alluding to the *true* negro races only.

What a fearfully potent type must that be to which its offshoots are ever so very ready to revert!

Another thing to be noted with regard to this curious division of humanity is the little difference that it makes to their outward character, whether they are saints or sinners.

I do not think that anyone will deny that Jowè had deteriorated very greatly and very rapidly, yet, though he knew himself to be utterly changed, and was in constant dread that his dark deeds might be discovered, no one judging from the surface could have noticed any difference in him. He had not turned a feather, so to speak, but was still a pleasant companion, a highly educated and intelligent man; could laugh with Rosalind in the forest of Arden, weep pitifully over Pomphilia, and feel the blood mount to his cheeks as a rush of sympathy went out from him to the noble priest Caponsacchi. He could lecture and teach with a gentle and earnest persuasiveness that was most touching, and the curious thing was that at the time he really felt what he was striving to impart to his audience. Well up in current literature, he would have been fully capable of writing, for the best of the religious Press, a sympathetic and altogether admirable treatise upon, say, Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*, had it then been published, or Mr. Bailey Saunders' *Quest of Faith*. What is one to make of it? He was a strange and dubious problem, though one common enough if only looked for in the right place.

Within a very short period after the frenzied dance in the forest, Jowè, notwithstanding his saintly demeanour, sank to the lowest depths. Here was girl after girl in his class mysteriously disappearing, and with them an occasional boy; but more frequently the boys disappeared from the classes of the missionaries' wives. Some would leave the Mission to visit a friend or relation in Westeria, and never be seen again, while others who resided in the town would as unaccountably disappear from their own homes. Heart-broken fathers and mothers searched the jungles, and voiced their despair and sorrow in loud outcries, but none were more troubled and grieved by these losses than Jowè himself, and none more energetic in seeking for traces or news of the lost little ones. Yet who was better able to give information than this highly educated, gentle, polite, and intelligent ogre?

"He touched nothing that he did not improve," might truly be written of Jowè after his initiation into the deeds of darkness, which now formed a very important portion of his life. He began at the lowest rung of the ladder, it might be said, but it did not take him long to mount to the top. The very fact that he condescended to have anything to do with his companions was the greatest flattery he could have offered

* Appendix, Note 13.

them, and flattery is as powerful in the hut of a cannibal negro as in the drawing-room of a vegetarian duchess—if there be such a person.

Jowè soon found their methods crude, their organisation defective, and he shortly improved both.

The oldest member of the gang, a blear-eyed, but still powerful negro, who dwelt just within the forest, apparently making a living by collecting gums and bartering odds and ends, but really drawing his principal means of existence from a rude quackery and the sale of Obi charms and nostrums, entered heart and soul with Jowè into this reorganisation of their secret society. All the lower and dirtier work was done by him, and only the more artistic details in the general scheme of improvement were suggested and carried out by his highly educated accomplice. Kako implicitly believed in Jowè, and regarded him with a kind of veneration, though from him, as from everyone else, he kept back one fatal secret.

Jowè, under sufficiently appalling circumstances, had early played off some of his conjuring tricks upon Kako and the other celebrants then assembled, reducing them in a few minutes to a state of impotent and grovelling terror. When they had somewhat recovered their spirits Jowè explained to them his ideas and the methods he wished adopted, and so the “Human Leopard Society” of Westeria was founded.

For many years the most bloody and terrible rites of the wretches who had been initiated in the deepest mysteries of Obi had taken place before a huge tree, a member of the *Ficus* family, which, could it have spoken, would have fascinated and appalled its hearers with its tale of ghastly wrongs. The tree faced an opening of about an acre in extent, surrounded by the densest forest, whose natural closeness had been rendered more impenetrable and thorny by the judicious lopping and trimming of certain undergrowth. This impenetrability had been assisted by the planting of a broad belt of almost impassable scrub in an irregular circle round the clearing. Here, where the whole forest itself was very thick and difficult of passage, except down the narrow footpaths that led through it in different directions, no one was likely to push or cut his way into a seemingly extra dense portion, and so, though situated on the very outskirts of the town, the meeting-place had remained unsuspected and unknown to any but the members of the society.

A single path led from the clearing and joined the main road to the town. But the point of junction with the town road was so cunningly adapted both by nature and art to the exigencies of the case that the path to the clearing had never been discovered. In fact, it could not very well be discovered, for at the before-mentioned junction stood a hoary tree which concealed it completely. Anyone passing behind the tree would, it is true, have found himself or herself in a path, running right and left, but no matter which direction the traveller had chosen to take, the path merely led back to the main road. Apparently this path was just a *détour* which of course no one wanted to take—or at least not twice. But about the middle of this semi-circular pathway, and nearly opposite its tree-hidden, central entrance, stood another large trunk, protruding well into the path, and close behind two smaller trees, so near that only just sufficient space remained to enable a man to squeeze between them. Behind that narrow doorway, so to call it, lay the well-beaten track—running at right angles to the semicircular “blind path”—that led direct to the clearing. Directly opposite its mouth, about seventy yards away on the further side of the clearing, stood the huge *Ficus* tree already mentioned. This also had its attendant smaller trees, but growing one on either side and touching the forest. No ordinary black would have dared to pass to the rear of them, for from their branches on either flank hung suspended the most terrible fetish charms that Kako had been able to collect or contrive.

It was a strange little dissenting chapel to lie so snug and close beside the temples of other and more orthodox faiths, and I doubt not that had they known of its existence, Protestants, Catholics, and Moslems would have met upon common ground and joined heartily in its demolition.

The soft wax lights in the dining-room at Government House shone over a profusion of flowers, sending sharper reflections across the polished surface of the silver plate and glittering from the glass and cut crystal of the well-set table. The general conversation had fallen away, and all were listening to a discussion between Jowè and the Governor himself as to the respective merits of the Froebel and other educational systems. Jowè spoke well, as usual, and somehow seemed to give interest to the most uninteresting subjects, but he knew when to stop, and before either host or guests felt bored he glided off into a lighter and more general exchange of opinion upon the popular topics of the day, induced by the arrival per mail steamer that morning of the fortnight's budget of illustrated papers and home news.

Coffee and kümmel having gone their rounds, Jowè, being no great smoker and not particularly fond of alcohol in any shape, was glad when his host suggested joining the ladies, and shortly afterwards found himself beside Miss Maynard, with whom he had not had an opportunity of exchanging a sentence during dinner, as she had not been seated near him.

"I have not seen you at any of my lectures lately, Miss Maynard," he said—Jowè was just then giving a series of lectures upon Joan of Arc and other heroines, which were creating quite a small sensation in Westeria—"and you have not brought the boys to my classes. You and Lady Tumbling are really deserting me."

"Not at all, Mr. Jowè," she rejoined; "we have not the least intention of deserting you; unfortunately we have been twice detained just when we were on our way to go and hear you. The boys, too, have not been very well, you know," she added, laughing. "It is the 'mangoe season,' and one cannot prevent the servants from giving them fruit."

"I hope there is nothing seriously the matter with my little friends?" Jowè went on.

"Oh no! nothing. Set yourself quite at ease; it is only mangoes or some other trash that they have got hold of. There is an old woman who comes round selling a drink that all the servants like, and as she also deals in sweetmeats, possibly the boys have been eating some of her stock-in-trade."

"By the drink I presume you mean *arruà*. The natives here are very fond of it. You have not tried it yourself?"

"No," said Miss Maynard, "I never have. I do not think I could attempt it; funny-looking stuff it is when it comes out of the old woman's dirty calabash."

"It comes out of a calabash, Miss Maynard," said Jowè reprovingly, "but not a dirty one; these old people are most careful when they prepare it, and all their dishes are quite clean. You see, it would not ferment properly if the calabash were dirty. I shall have to give you a course of lectures upon the foods and drinks of—well, I suppose I must call them my countrymen and women."

Jowè laughed as he said this, and so did Miss Maynard—for no particular reason. Jowè regarded her curiously; it might almost be said malignantly. But she did not notice his expression. He appeared quite at his ease, however. All his late diffidence in her presence seemed to have fallen from him, and with it had gone the nobler spirit that hitherto had dominated his passion. As he watched her the dull gleam in his eyes suddenly became intensified.

"Miss Maynard," he said abruptly, changing his tone, "there is something I should like to show you in the forest not far from the end of the Government House garden. I am sure that you will not mind meeting me there, and also sure that you will be very much interested in the spectacle I wish you to see."

"Certainly, Mr. Jowè," said Miss Maynard thoughtlessly, "I do not mind in the least. I shall be very pleased to see your mysterious something, and so will the boys."

"No," said Jowè, "you must come alone. Promise me? You need have no fear; I will not refer to the subject you once forbade me to speak of: that is all past and put away. I am only a friend now, if I may call myself by that term." And with a sudden impulse he held out his hand.

Miss Maynard gave him hers. She felt somehow as if she had been unkind to him, and had done him an unmerited wrong, some injury for which it was her duty to atone, and so she said, scarcely thinking of what she was saying, "I am sorry, Mr. Jowè; I will come as your friend and see what you wish to show me."

"Thank you," said Jowè, adding, after a pause, "I will write and tell you the exact time and spot. You will easily find the place; it is quite close. But please do not say a word of this to anyone until afterwards—you know how funny people are. I hope I shall see you there to-morrow at about four or half-past, but I will let you know in my note."

"To-morrow will do nicely," said Miss Maynard, "because I am to be at home. Lady Tumbling has a friend who is going to take my place in the afternoon drive with the children."

"Very well," said Jowè, "that is settled." And he broke off the conversation, leaving Miss Maynard mystified, half frightened, and inclined to repent the promise she had given. Why she had given it she could not for the life of her have explained.

Jowè went home that night surprised at his own audacity and at the sudden impulse that had prompted his curious request. When next morning he had sent Miss Maynard a note with exact instructions how to find the little clearing, together with a sketch-map of the route, he dismissed the matter from his thoughts, "for," he reasoned, "the very fact of my giving her these elaborate explanations will prevent her coming; I should not dream of going myself under the circumstances, and I am sure she will not. I will meet her in a day or two, and accept her excuse for not doing that which no sane man could ever expect her to do."

So Jowè argued, and argued rightly, but he did not take into account the promise that, once given, may not be put aside lightly by a woman who feels that she has inadvertently caused suffering which she cannot in any other way assuage. Moreover, he did not take into account the element of mystery, nor realise the full force of that potent prompter, and the constraining power of female curiosity.

A little after four o'clock, when the shadows were lengthening on the grass, and after Lady Tumbling, with her friend and children, filling the Governor's barouche, had passed out through the sentry-guarded gates of the official residence, Miss Maynard, in a graceful, well-fitting, tailor-made dress, a soft hat, and stout boots, went down the long pathway that led to the end of the great garden, opened the little wicket, and walked across the narrow cleared space beyond, and on into the forest path that lay before her.

Jowè's instructions were full and explicit, and she had no difficulty in finding the right road. Continuing up the main track for about a hundred yards and following his directions to the letter, she turned off on the right into the little semicircular "blind path-way" that swept round the projecting tree, and then, still following his instructions, passed behind the great trunk that stood at almost the central point of this divergence, and thence through the narrow aperture between the two smaller trees beyond it. Here she found herself upon the well-beaten pathway already described, and following it up for some hundred and thirty yards, she finally stepped out into the clearing.

At first her eyes were a little dazzled on coming out of the dark and impenetrable forest into the full glare of the sun, but in a few seconds she realised the sort of place she was in, though marvelling greatly that it should be so bare of trees and under-growth, when all around it the primæval forest stood like an inclosing wall.

At the far end of the somewhat irregular oval, and almost exactly opposite to her, she saw the great *Ficus*, a giant even among its brother giants, with the lesser trees on either side, like ministers in attendance. Walking across the clearing and approaching the trees closely, she observed a couple of stout forked stakes about nine feet high, planted firmly in the ground immediately in front of the huge *Ficus*,

and noticed in several places hard by, the remains of recent fires and ashes lying in each case between three blackened stones upon which some pot or other utensil had evidently been set. Drawing still nearer, she saw the fetish charms, rubbishy tokens of superstition, scattered about or hanging upon the two smaller trees that flanked the big one. Full of curiosity, she disregarded the rags and odds and ends and pushed round to the back of the trees, where, in making her way between a small shrub and the trunk of the gigantic *Ficus*, she was surprised to find that the bush concealed an entrance into the huge trunk itself, which appeared perfectly hollow. Moreover, the entrance had clearly been cut, or enlarged with a knife. Stooping down, the better to examine this curious doorway, she was filled with wonder to find that it was quite light inside, and that the hollow extended for a great distance up the trunk. The apertures through which the light entered were knot-holes, or open spaces left by decayed branches that had fallen out. The inside of the decayed trunk looked clean, so without more ado she stepped within, when she was surprised to find that there were other "windows," not natural, but carved in the solid bark, through which slanting rays of sunlight, in which the busy motes danced and chased one another, entered to further illuminate the interior. These artificial apertures were just about the height of her eyes, and through them she could command at her convenience a perfect view of the whole clearing.

"It's curious," she thought, "that I didn't notice them from the outside when I was standing in front of the tree; I'll go and look for them," and suiting action to the thought she stepped out, and made her way past the concealing bush and other trees to the clearing.

"It is rather an uncanny sort of place," she reflected, "but I suppose Mr. Jowè will soon be here to explain. I daresay I shall have an entertaining lecture from him upon the more esoteric habits of his countrymen."

Arrived in front of the great stem she glanced upwards, but could see no holes in it. All appeared solid, and no one would have guessed that the lordly forest giant was for a good portion of its length as hollow as a bamboo. A careful examination, however, showed her first one small hole and then another, almost invisible amid the swellings and depressions of the rough bark. Going round again to the back and once more entering the tree, she had another good survey of the clearing from that place of vantage and then determined, if Jowè did not shortly arrive, to give him up for the afternoon and go back to Government House, with the virtuous feeling of having at any rate kept her promise, if she had not quite satisfied her curiosity.

However, while she was still gazing through one of the apertures, she saw a sight which filled her with terror, for, about twenty yards from the wall of forest opposite, stood a magnificent African leopard, and just coming out of the pathway into the clearing she caught sight of his mate. There was nothing for it now but to keep perfectly still and watch, and this she did in an agony of fear lest the beasts should scent her and attack her in her hiding-place. But the leopards were not seeking prey, for, judging by their ensanguined jaws, they had just had a good meal, probably of monkey, and were rather tenderly inclined than otherwise. She was not aware of this, however, and as they gambolled about and stretched themselves in the sun, lifting and waving their tails in the air, much as the *Hamadryad*, the dreaded *Ophiophagus Elaps* or hunting cobra, lifts and sways his head in the Eastern jungle, she felt as if every moment might be her last, and heartily repented of her folly in accepting Jowè's invitation.

Darker and darker it grew, until the leopards became almost undistinguishable, but an occasional growl or snarl of anger when one or the other became too boisterous in play, told her that they were still in the clearing, and forbade her to leave the hollow tree, where she remained on her knees, terrified, almost despairing, praying that she might be found by searchers from the house. Bitterly did she reproach herself for her imprudence, and desperately angry was she with Jowè, whom she suspected of harbouring revenge for his disappointment, and wreaking it in this cruel manner—a very natural feeling in the circumstances.

She was lying huddled up in one corner of the hollow tree, sufficiently wretched, hungry, and unhappy, when, at about eight o'clock, as she was able to tell from having just heard the evening gun, the sound of approaching footsteps attracted her attention. Rising quickly, and looking through her peephole, she saw lights in the open space in front.

The lights flickered feebly, but faintly illuminating their bearers, whose appearance was sufficiently terrifying. To the girl's excited imagination they were leopards, walking erect and carrying lanterns and torches! But as they came nearer she saw that the hideous shapes were human beings, grotesquely painted and decked, nude except for a leopard's skin, the head serving as a hood, the fore-paws knotted round the wearer's neck, the tail trailing on the ground behind. Having heard something in a vague way of such horrors and of the fiendish deeds committed, she watched breathlessly and in an agony of fear for further developments.

The negroes numbered from twenty to twenty-five; but as they drew still nearer she saw that seven or eight of them were women, nude like the men, save for the leopards' skins and various fetish charms which dangled about them. But now the torches and lanterns, set down in convenient positions, threw a strong light upon the open space. A couple of women brought dry firewood from the further side of the clearing and speedily kindled a large fire in front of the huge *Ficus*, but a little to the right of the horrified girl's direct line of vision. Then, upon three stones set round the fire, they placed a large iron cauldron, brought from some hiding-place at the edge of the inclosure. This done, the women fell back, and two men advanced carrying a roughly trimmed pole, the ends of which they placed in the forks of the two stout upright stakes previously described, the whole forming a gallows-like erection. At equal distances from the two ends of the transverse beam hung a couple of small pulleys, through which were reeved strong ropes some twelve feet in length. Each rope was fastened loosely by one end to the nearest upright, while the other end, which had an eyelet spliced into it, hung from the pulley. The ropes were thus capable of being instantly converted into nooses.

When these preparations, and others which Miss Maynard did not particularly note, had been made, the gang, men and women, faced about, as if waiting for something or somebody, for frequent glances were cast towards the entrance to the clearing. After a considerable delay, however, they apparently made up their minds not to wait any longer. An order was given, and one of the women advanced carrying a large cage of split bamboo, and passing under the crossbeam, which stood some five or six feet from the great tree, she placed her burden at the foot of the latter. As she passed beside the fire, however, a sudden flame, springing from beneath the great cauldron, revealed to the terrified watcher the contents of the cage. It was a huge snake, coiled up, and apparently sleeping. As I have said, the woman placed her burden at the foot of the tree and left it there. Here was another cause of alarm, for naturally Miss Maynard, who could not see the cage, feared the serpent had been allowed to escape, and that it would glide round the tree and into her retreat. But the horror caused by this episode was to be reduced almost to insignificance.

Presently from out of the darkness beyond the lights two little children, a boy and a girl, were brought forward and placed one under each of the nooses hanging from the beam; then they were lifted up while a large tin vessel, a sort of bath, or basin, was placed beneath each of them. In these they stood. The little girl appeared to be about eight years old, the boy not more than six. They were quite naked, except for a curious heavy head-dress, while their arms were pinioned to their sides, and their hands secured behind their backs. So the poor things stood in their basins, facing the tree and the coiled snake lying in its cage. Awe-struck, almost sick with ghastly forebodings as she was, Miss Maynard could remember afterwards that the children did not seem greatly alarmed; too young to know evil, perhaps they feared none. Poor innocents! They could not understand—could not have an inkling of the fate in store for them.

An equal number of the negroes, men and women, now ranged themselves in two opposite lines. Three others, men, half squatting, half sprawling behind the children, also faced the big tree. Two of these held nothing in their hands; the third, crouching in the centre, grasped something that gleamed brightly in the fitful flashes of the fire-light. It was a short, broad, curved knife or cutlass. The remaining celebrants, if so the wretches may be called, stood or squatted in a semicircle behind, while one of their number, an old woman, attended to the fire, keeping it well replenished with fuel.

Suddenly from the left and out of the darkness came the sound of the Obi drum, but not beaten in the usual manner; its strange hollow notes rang with startling effect across the clearing, and died away in the walls of tropic forest that stood about it. At the sound a strange frenzy seemed to possess the whole crew, but one which began gradually with gentle movement of the bodies and clapping of hands. As the drum-beats quickened the more excited grew the onlookers. The children, however, stood perfectly still, and indeed appeared to be under the influence of some drug or spell.

Suddenly from the line of women came the muttered chant—

“We have brought you here a nice little wife.”

A statement that was answered by the reply from the men opposite to them—

“And we have brought you here a nice little husband.”

“We have got everything ready for the marriage,” continued the women.

From the other side came the reply—

“And the men have prepared all that is needful.”

“O men, is your little husband willing?”

“O women, does your little wife want to be married?”

“Ask him, ask him, O men.”

“Ask her, O women, ask her.”

As the words died away the music came to a sudden stop, and there was a dead silence where before there had been the weird beating of the Obi drum and the muttered questions and responses.

Presently, one of the women, leaning slightly forward, addressed the little girl and asked her if she were ready to be married and if she liked her little husband. The poor creature looked dazed for a moment, and then, getting a sudden shake from the woman, answered timidly in the affirmative, when all the women clapped their hands together and said—

“O men, our little wife is ready and willing.”

Now it was the men’s turn, and one of them, leaning forward in like manner, addressed a similar question to the boy, who, however, seemed inclined to be sulky and required many shakings and threats before he assented and declared that he also was ready to be married.

Once again the brutal chorus was taken up, and questions and answers were passed backwards and forwards. It is needless to recall them. Luckily, the watcher within the tree was in far too great a state of terror to comprehend their meaning, even if she had understood the language. From ill words the wretches proceeded to ill actions with the helpless little victims, when suddenly a voice from the darkness called out a command, and both ranks, falling back a pace or two, dropped their hands to their sides and stood like statues. Instantly two of the men crouching behind the children drew down the ropes that hung above them, and rapidly forming a noose by passing the rope itself back through the eyelet, slipped the respective nooses round the children’s feet just above their ankles, drew them tight, and then, unfastening the loose running knot by which the other ends were secured to the bottom of the upright posts, handed one rope to the men and the other to the women standing in lines on either side. Another command came from the darkness, followed by three sharp taps upon the drum. Immediately the men and women, with a sudden jerk, drew the ropes through the pulleys, instantly throwing the children off their feet; the next moment they were reversed and hauled up, their feet touching the pulleys above, their

heads hanging down over the basins. As soon as this was accomplished, the third crouching man—he with the knife—sprang erect, and with two sharp slicing blows, cut their throats from ear to ear, almost severing the vertebrae.

Then the executioner, waving his bloody knife aloft, stepped out into the full light of the fire, facing the great *Ficus* and the snake; and the horrified girl saw in this naked, maddened murderer the man who had directed her to that ghastly slaughter-place, the polished, highly educated, religious gentleman—Jowè.

As she recognised him her self-control gave way. She could bear up no longer. Shriek after shriek—hysterical, ear-piercing—burst from her lips, ringing awful and unearthly in the hollow tree and from the openings in its shell, which increased and deflected the sounds as though possessing some strange powers of ventriloquism, and reverberated in the ears of the wretched gang of murderers until they imagined they were about to be assailed by a thousand screaming devils.

It burst upon them at the supreme moment when their excitement had reached its highest pitch—the moment in which the spirit of Obi might be expected to make itself manifest, the result being that the panic-stricken Human Leopards vanished—melted into the dense jungle, even more desperately alarmed than Miss Maynard, if that were possible.

The secret of the hollow tree was unknown to all of them except Kako, the white-headed, blear-eyed old negro, whose voice from the darkness had directed the ceremonies; and this was the fatal secret he had kept from Jowè. Many a time he had used the tree and the spy holes in the service of the devil he worshipped and served, but no such terrible sounds had ever before been emitted from that habitation of Obi. So, sharing the general panic, he fled with the others.

How Miss Maynard managed to thread the devious paths and reach Government House she never knew. For weeks she was haunted by the memory of the hideous drip—drip—drip of the blood that fell from the two little victims upon the sounding tins below.

At Government House she arrived, however, and half crazy though she was, managed to tell the Governor enough of the story to induce prompt action on his part. Within an hour he and several officers, accompanied by a sufficient force of police and Houssa soldiers, were upon the spot, orders having previously been given that the houses of all the suspects should be watched.

No one questioned the truth of the girl's story, nor her wonderful and providential escape. The horrible facts were only too evident when they reached the clearing. There was no need to ask the meaning of the cauldron under which the fire was still burning, and in which the water was still boiling. No need to ask the meaning of the plantain-leaf plates, the butcher knives, and other utensils. Had it not been for the unlooked-for interruption, the cannibal feast would even then have been in full swing. Subsequent search made in the clearing and among the heaps of ashes, revealed the remains of other missing children in the shape of buried clothing and trinkets, bones, and fragments of partially-cooked human flesh.

The chief criminals were caught and duly committed for trial. The Crown had little difficulty in proving that Jowè and his companions, organised into a band styling themselves "The Human Leopard Society," had been for some time past in the habit of remorselessly killing and devouring their fellow-creatures with or without a ceremony of a semi-religious and mystical nature. This being proved, Jowè and his associates were duly hanged, as, no doubt, my readers who are in the habit of perusing the daily papers will recollect without any great effort of memory.*

* Appendix, Note 14.

Whether their execution had any real effect is another matter; for since Jowè and his friends met their deserts, another society called “The Human Alligators” has been inaugurated and suppressed, as, no doubt, readers of our well-informed Press have again observed.* West Africa contains other ferocious animals besides leopards and alligators. By what title will the next Cannibal Society style itself?

* * * * *

Miss Maynard and Lady Tumbling left the country almost immediately after the trial. Their nerves had been too severely shaken for much further intercourse with Africa, and at this one can hardly be surprised. But notwithstanding her hurried departure, a certain West African merchant could not permit Miss Maynard to disappear out of his life, to which the following paragraph, published in the *Morning Post* some two years later, will bear witness:—

Yesterday, at St. George’s, Hanover Square, Charles Frederick, eldest son of Frederick Hinton, Esquire, of London and Torquay, to Alice, only daughter of the Reverend Arthur Maynard, of Littlecomb, Torquay, Devon.
(African papers please copy.)

* * * * *

There is a negro problem in the States. There is a negro problem in Africa, where it will certainly become more acute. I have presented my readers with one aspect of it.† How are we and our cousins across the Atlantic prepared to settle these questions? Are we to treat the negro peoples as a kind and just but, when necessary, severe father would deal with his somewhat easily-led-away and ill-balanced, but withal genial and sometimes intelligent children; or are we to deal with them by means of the very effective instruments placed in our hands by Mr. Maxim and the various eminent manufacturers of magazine rifles and fixed ammunition? Practically, in one way or the other, this matter must be settled, and however numerous the intelligent, high-principled, and high-minded individuals may be—and there are, I gladly admit it, many such among the negro races—it must be remembered that they are exceptions, and it is the mass we have to consider and with whom we have to deal. That the mass is the reverse of intelligent and high-principled, no one who has studied the subject will deny; further, that it contains many good and delightful qualities is equally true and not to be denied. My prescription, if I may be allowed to write one, is three parts extreme kindness, three parts unflinching sternness in the administration of justice, tempered, however, by a due portion of humour and any quantity of common sense. This treatment must accompany the suppression, wherever possible, of all that would lead to the production of a mixed race; a fatal stumbling-block that has cost more than one Latin race the crown of empire.

* Appendix, Note 15.

† Appendix, Note 16.

APPENDIX

Note 1. Page 10.

“A meeting of the Liverpool Geographical Society was held yesterday afternoon. . . . The chairman . . . said that, much as we might regret the very terrible disaster which had recently occurred, many hundreds of human beings would be annually spared crucifixion, and the country would become settled, peaceful, and prosperous. He exhibited a sample of one of the guns usually sent to Benin, many hundreds of thousands of which had been imported in years past. They were nearly 6 ft. long, were made in Birmingham, and were called ‘Long Danes.’ They were flint-locks, and cost 7s. each, made to order.”—*Daily Graphic*.

Note 2. Page 12.

“At a meeting of the African trade section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce yesterday, several letters from English traders on the West Coast of Africa were read on the subject of the policy of the King of Benin as to matters of trade, and as to the barbarous cruelties still practised by him in his country. The writers of the letters point out that the Benin country is rich in palm oil, gum, and rubber, but it is impossible to develop the resources of the district in consequence of the obstructive tactics of the King. They also supply some authentic details as to the horrible barbarities practised by him. It is stated that it is the custom of the King to kill yearly a large number of slaves to celebrate the anniversary of his father’s death, while *young women are crucified in times of drought or too much rain in order to propitiate the gods*. It was resolved that copies of the letters be sent to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and that he be asked to take steps to put an end to the present state of affairs at Benin.”—*St. James’s Gazette*.

Note 3. Page 19.

“Slaves are daily crucified, or buried alive among the foundations of new buildings.”—*Globe*.

“As the expedition marched through the country, signs of fetish worship and human sacrifices were everywhere seen. At Affar-Eket one officer counted no fewer than six human beings who had been either crucified on the trees in the town or otherwise killed, no doubt to appease the natives’ ‘Ju-Ju.’ In most cases the victims were women. One of the most revolting sights was the body of a poor woman who had been tied to a tree, her arms fastened across her breast, and her knees drawn up as high as possible. The position while the poor victim lived must have been one of terrible cruelty. She had been starved to death, but a quantity of food was still before the dead body, having been placed in the poor creature’s sight to add to the torments of her pangs of hunger. This is merely one instance of the terrible cruelties practised. The white officers told the chiefs and people that they must abolish such customs. The expedition had a marvellous effect in restoring the whole country to order and peace by destroying the power of the fetish Quae tribe. They have for years been a most ferocious people, the women being as cruel as the men.”—*Daily Graphic*.

Note 4. Page 19.

“In the case of certain tribes the mother of twins is ruthlessly destroyed with her offspring. The reason given by the natives for this superstition can hardly be stated here, and the following paragraph will show that twins are not the only unfortunates liable to infanticide.

“News was brought by the Royal Mail steamer *Calabar*, which arrived yesterday at Liverpool from the West African coast, that at Axim, Gold Coast Colony, a sworn deposition had been made before District Commissioner D. K. McDowell, by James Erskine, chief of Attuaboe in the Axim district. The chief states that by native custom the tenth child of every family is killed by being buried alive, or strangled, or drowned. The mother is put away in a hut, which is open at both ends, and when the child is born it is taken from her and put to death.

“Thousands of children, the chief states, have been in this way killed, but owing to the powerful influence which the fetish priests have over the people, as well as the people’s own superstitious belief, it is impossible for the authorities to get

information of the murders. The chief declares that in his opinion nothing short of stringent legislation can stop the wholesale slaughter.”—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

Note 5. Page 28.

“The writer was told by one of the few white men who had been there that the creek was blocked by headless bodies. This may sound strange, but there are many ghastly things done on the Niger.”—*Globe*.

Note 6. Page 29.

“The King addressed the Protectorate official as follows:—

“ ‘I have heard the White Queen is powerful, therefore I have allowed a few of her people to settle near the mouth of my river; but I am King of Benin, and the next white man who enters my swamps will be shot.’ ”—*Globe*.

Note 7. Page 53.

“A grim tragedy took place here less than two years ago, for, incensed at the imposition of the heavy duties upon their ‘trade,’ and the summary manner in which the gin smugglers were dealt with by the Chartered Company’s officials, the savage Nimbi tribe came down, 900 strong, when the Company’s troops were away, and sacked the factory. On the spot where we stood some 200 Krooboys, a few only being armed, were hemmed in between the sheds. Some cut their way through, and when, after a hopeless struggle, the remainder threw down their arms, they were hurled one after another against the tree. A big river man, armed with razor-edged hatchet, stood on either side, and each time the naked flesh of the captive touched the rough bark, the blades came down, shearing through skull and spine. The three white men who were holding the verandah of the Residency against desperate odds with repeating rifles will never forget the screams of agony which rang out above the din of the firing—at least, so one told the writer. When the Nimbi butchers were tired of slaughter, *the survivors were nailed through hands and feet into the bottom of the canoes and carried three days’ journey through the creeks to be killed and eaten on the Nimbi beach*. It is a ghastly story, but absolutely true, and it is generally believed in the Niger creeks that the leader of the raid was a negro educated at an English university, and a professed Christian. There is always trouble somewhere in the Niger rivers, and things are done there by both white and black men, the details of which seldom reach England, and would hardly be credited if they did.”—*Globe*.

Note 8. Page 57.

“The writer has seen corpses with crushed skulls drifting down the creeks with the ebb tide, a significant hint of what goes on in the forest beyond.”—*Globe*.

Note 9. Page 63.

“Generally speaking, the Lower Niger country is a land of devil worship, slave raiding, human sacrifice, *and even cannibalism*, and the officers of both Chartered Company and Protectorate could tell strange tales were they allowed to speak.”—*Globe*.

“They quite believed that the white men ate white men, as they themselves ate their fellow-blacks. A big chief offered Mr. McCann the smoked thigh of a native. This was considered a gracious act. To refuse it would be unfriendly. Mr. McCann was in a dilemma; but he feigned illness, and said he was not eating just then. The chief eventually put the matter off good-humouredly by saying he supposed the white man preferred white man to eat instead of black man.

“ ‘The Mpongwes,’ said Mr. McCann, ‘are in ferocity and pugnacious qualities second to no other tribe in Africa. Their villages mostly consist of a single street, from 600 yards to 1,500 yards long, on each side of which are the houses. In these houses they cook, eat, and sleep, and keep their store of provisions, the chief of which is smoked human flesh, hung up to the rafters. Although ferocious and quarrelsome to a degree, they are very industrious. They show considerable skill in the manufacture of pottery, and the designs of their cooking pots, water jars, tobacco pipes, and palm-wine bottles are extremely

artistic. In ironwork they are also skilful workers. Although they kill game for food, they much prefer human meat to any other.’ ”—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

Note 10. Page 67.

“The Moslem negroes of many different nations are, as a rule, to be depended upon for courage and honesty. The British Government fully recognises this fact, for every black soldier in our West African colonies is a Mahomedan, except some Sierra Leone West Indians, and their religion is a mixture of Christianity and Obeah worship.”—*Globe*.

Note 11. Page 69.

Any reader who does not know what is meant by the “hornless goat” may as well learn at once that by it is meant the human victim of the semi-religious cannibal feasts that take place among the negroes. Should he care to acquire more knowledge of the subject, there is ample official and semi-official literature from which to do so.

Note 12. Page 69.

“The ‘Human Alligators’ carry on their operations chiefly on the Sherbro River. The Society seems to have been already in existence at the time of the ‘Human Leopards,’ and in order to become a member it was necessary to go through what is called a ‘Parroh’ rite, that is, to eat human flesh.”—*Daily Graphic*.

Note 13. Page 70.

I recommend any who may be inclined to cavil at this paragraph to make a short study of the history of Haiti and San Domingo, more particularly the former. A brief study of Spenser St. John’s book, *The Black Republic*, will, I think, convince the most sceptical that there is more than a mere “something” in it, and send them shuddering from its pages.

Note 14. Page 77.

“The African Royal Mail steamer *Cabenda*, which arrived at Liverpool yesterday from the West Coast of Africa, brings news of an extraordinary case of cannibalism in a British colony, as a result of which three men have been hanged. The men belonged to a Society, the ‘Human Leopard Society.’ Covered with leopard skins, they had been in the habit of secreting themselves in the bush, near various villages. Anyone who ventured out was set upon and killed, and a cannibal feast was afterwards held. So serious had the matter become that the Sierra Leone Government sent men in pursuit of the murderers. Nine natives were arrested. On investigation six men were liberated; the other three were brought down to Freetown for trial before a jury. Among them was a man named Jowè, who was formerly a Sunday-school teacher at Sierra Leone. The three prisoners were found guilty and sentenced to be hanged.”—*Reuter*.—*Daily Graphic*.

Note 15. Page 78.

“There have been no recent arrests in connection with the ‘Human Alligator’ gang.”—*Daily Graphic*.

The “Human Alligators,” like the “Human Leopards,” and many other similar societies, have all of them in common a hideous sacramental rite, in which the partaking of human flesh, not unmixed with other villainies, is a common and general point of resemblance. Religion, lust, and bloodshed, as usual, walking hand in hand.

Note 16. Page 78.

One of the best of shorter contributions to this question is Miss Banks’ article in the *Nineteenth Century*, “The American Negro and His Place.” It deals with the question more from the social than the physical side, and, of course, only from the Transatlantic point of view; but the question has many sides, and each of them affords material for thought. Spenser St.

John's *Black Republic* may be read with advantage by any sceptic, and those who believe that the negro race contains in itself the potentialities of political advancement. Those seeking further enlightenment will not have to hunt far afield; the literature is voluminous. The negro has his place, and a very good and comfortable place and position too, but with very rare exceptions it does not lie upon the same plane as that of the white man, at least, of the white man of Anglo-Saxon, or Anglo-Germanic, or Scandinavian race, nor in all probability of the Slavonic. The Latin races amalgamate bravely with the black, though even in their case the last state of that race is worse than the first. Through this sin against the species the Portuguese lost their empire. Let us keep ours.

Note 17. Page v.

BADEN-POWELL'S TESTIMONY.

"In England we scarcely realise the extent to which human sacrifice had been carried on in Ashanti previous to the late expedition, but evidences were not wanting to show it.

"In the first place, the name Kumassi means 'the death-place.'

"The town possessed no less than three places of execution; one, for private executions, was at the palace; a second, for public decapitations, was on the parade-ground; a third, for fetish sacrifices, was in the sacred village of Bantama.

"Close to the parade-ground was the grove into which the remains of the victims were flung, and which very aptly was known as 'Golgotha' to the members of the force. The ground here was found covered with skulls and bones of hundreds of victims. At Bantama was the celebrated execution bowl, which was fully described by Bowdich in his account of Kumassi in 1817. It is a large brass basin some five feet in diameter. It is ornamented with four small lions, and a number of round knobs all round its rim, except at one part, where there is a space for the victim's neck to rest on the edge. The blood of the victims was allowed to putrefy in the bowl, and leaves of certain herbs being added, it was considered a very valuable fetish medicine. The bowl has now been brought to England. Then in Kumassi are two blocks of houses occupied entirely by the executioners—one being assigned to the sacrificial, the other to the criminal executioners. Among the loot taken in the houses of Prempeh and of his chiefs were several 'blood-stools,' or stools which had been used as blocks for executions, and which bore very visible signs of having been so used. In these notes, be it remembered, we are only dealing with Kumassi, but every king—and there were some half a dozen of them in the Ashanti empire—had powers of life and death over his subjects, and carried out his human sacrifices on a minor scale in his own capital.

"In fact, the ex-king of Bekwai was deposed on account of his over-indulgence in that form of amusement.

"Any great public function was seized on as an excuse for human sacrifices. There was the annual 'yam custom,' or harvest festival, at which large numbers of victims were often offered to the gods. Then the king went every quarter to pay his devotions to the shades of his ancestors at Bantama, and this demanded the deaths of twenty men over the great bowl on each occasion. On the death of any great personage two of the household slaves were at once killed on the threshold of the door, in order to attend their master immediately in his new life, and his grave was afterwards lined with the bodies of more slaves who were to form his retinue in the spirit world. It was thought all the better if, during the burial, one of the attendant mourners could be stunned by a club, and dropped, still breathing, into the grave before it was filled in. In the case of a great lady dying, slave-girls were the victims. This custom of sacrifice at funerals was called 'washing the grave.' On the death of a king the custom of washing the grave involved enormous sacrifices. Then sacrifices were also made to propitiate the gods when war was about to be entered upon or other trouble was impending. Victims were also killed to deter an enemy from approaching the capital; sometimes they were impaled and set upon the path, with their hand pointing to the enemy and bidding him to retire. At other times the victim was beheaded and the head replaced looking in the wrong direction; or he was buried alive in the pathway, standing upright, with only his head above ground, to remain thus until starvation or—what was infinitely worse—the ants made an end of him."—*The Downfall of Prempeh*, by Major-General R. S. S. Baden-Powell, London, 1900.